

LECTURES
ON THE
CATECHISM
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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By WILLIAM GILPIN, M. A.
VICAR OF BOLDRE, NEAR LYMINGTON.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N :

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LECTURE - XIV.

Duties owing to particular persons—
duty of children to parents—respect
and obedience—in what the former
consists—in what the latter—succour-
ing a parent—brotherly affection—
obedience to law—founded on the ad-
vantages of society.

LECTURE XIV

The first part of the lecture was devoted to a discussion of the history of the subject. The speaker then turned to the question of the present state of the subject, and finally to the question of the future of the subject.

THE END

FROM the two grand principles of “loving our neighbour as ourselves; and of doing to others, as we would have them do to us,” which regulate our social intercourse in general, we proceed to those more confined duties, which arise from particular relations, connections, and stations in life.

Among these, we are first taught, as indeed the order of nature directs, to consider the great duty of children to parents.

The two points to be insisted on, are respect and obedience. Both these should naturally spring from love; to which parents have the highest claim. And indeed parents, in general, behave to their children, in a manner both to deserve and to obtain their love.

But if the kindness of the parent be not such as to work upon the affections of the child, yet still the parent has a title to respect and obedience, on the principle of duty ; a principle, which the voice of nature dictates ; which reason inculcates ; which human laws, and human customs all join to enforce ; and which the word of God strictly commands.

The child will shew respect to his parent, by treating him, at all times with deference. He will consult his parent's inclination ; and shew a readiness in a thousand nameless trifles, to conform himself to it. He will never peevishly contradict his parent ; and when he offers a contrary opinion, he will offer it modestly. Respect will teach him also, not only to put the best colouring upon the infirmities of his parent ; but even
if

if those infirmities be great, it will soften and screen them, as much as possible, from the public eye.

Obedience goes a step further, and supposes a positive command. In things unlawful indeed, the parental authority cannot bind: but this is a case that rarely happens. The great danger is on the other side; that children, through obstinacy, or fullness, should refuse their parents lawful commands; to the observance of all which, however inconvenient to themselves, they are tied by various motives; and above all, by the command of God; who in his sacred denunciations against sin, ranks disobedience to parents among the worst.*

They are farther bound, not only to obey the commands of their parents;

* *Rom. i. 30.*

but

but to obey them cheerfully. He does but half his duty, who does it not from his heart.

There remains still a third part of filial duty, which peculiarly belongs to children, when grown up. This the catechism calls succouring, or administering to the necessities of the parent; either in the way of managing his affairs, when he is less able to manage them himself; or in supplying his wants, should he need assistance in that way. And this the child should do, on the united principles of love, duty, and gratitude. The hypocritical jew would sometimes evade this duty, by dedicating to sacred uses, what should have been expended in assisting his parent. Our Saviour sharply rebukes this perversion of duty; and gives him to understand, that no pretence of serving God,

God, can cover the neglect of assisting a parent. And if no pretence of serving God can do it, surely every other pretence must still be more unnatural.

Under this head also we may consider that attention, and love, which are due to other relations, especially that mutual affection, which should subsist between brothers. The name of brother expresses the highest degree of tenderness; and is generally used in scripture, as a term of peculiar endearment, to call men to the practice of social virtue. It reminds them of every kindness, which man can shew to man. If then, we ought to treat all mankind with the affection of brothers, in what light must they appear, who being really such, are ever at variance with each other; continually doing spiteful actions, and shewing upon every occasion, not only a want of brotherly

therly kindness; but even of common regard?

The next part of our duty, is "to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him."

By the "king, and all that are put in authority under him," is meant the various parts of the government we live under, of which the king is the head: and the meaning of the precept is, that we ought to live in dutiful submission to legal authority.

Government and society are united. We cannot have one without the other; and we submit to the inconveniences, for the sake of the advantages.

The end of society is mutual safety and convenience. Without it, even safety

safety could in no degree be obtained : the good would become a prey to the bad : nay the very human species to the beasts of the field.

Still less could we obtain the conveniences of life ; which cannot be had without the labour of many. If every man depended upon himself for what he enjoyed, how destitute would be the situation of human affairs !

But even safety and convenience are not the only fruits of society. Man, living merely by himself, would be an ignorant, unpolished savage. It is the intercourse of society, which cultivates the human mind. One man's knowledge, and experience is built upon another's ; and so the great edifice of science, and polished life, is reared.

To

To enjoy these advantages, therefore, men joined in society; and hence it became necessary, that government should be established. Magistrates were created; laws made; taxes submitted to; and every one, instead of righting himself (except in mere self-defence) is enjoined to appeal to the laws he lives under, as the best security of his life and property.

L E G-

LECTURE XV.

Duty to our teachers, and instructors—
arising from the great importance of
knowledge, and religion—and the
great necessity of gaining habits of at-
tention, and of virtue in our youth
—analogy of youth and manhood to
this world and the next.

LECTURE XV.

There is one another and distinct
thing from the great importance of
knowledge, and religion—and the
great necessity of having habits of
reason, and of being in our hands
—easily of truth and method to
the world as the next

WE are next enjoined “to submit ourselves to all our governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters.” Here another species of government is pointed out. The laws of society are meant to govern our riper years: the instructions of our teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters are meant to guide our youth,

By our “teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters,” are meant all those, who have the care of our education, and of our instruction in religion; whom we are to obey, and listen to with humility, and attention, as the means of our advancement in knowledge, and religion. The instructions we receive from them, are unquestionably subject to our own judgment in future life; for by his own judgment
every

every man must stand, or fall. But, during our youth, it is highly proper for us to pay a dutiful submission to their instructions, as we cannot yet be supposed to have formed any judgment of our own. At that early age, it should be our endeavour to acquire knowledge; and afterwards unprejudiced to form our opinions.

The duty which young people owe to their instructors, cannot be shewn better, than in the effect, which the instructions they receive, have upon them. They would do well, therefore, to consider the advantages of an early attention to these two things, both of great importance, knowledge and religion.

The great use of knowledge in all its various branches (to which the learned languages are generally considered as an intro-

introduction) is to free the mind from the prejudices of ignorance; and to give it juster, and more enlarged conceptions, than are the mere growth of rude nature. By reading, you add the experience of others to your own. It is the improvement of the mind chiefly, that makes the difference between man and man; and gives one man, a real superiority over another.

Besides, the mind must be employed. The lower orders of men have their attention much ingrossed by those employments, in which the necessities of life engage them: and it is happy that they have. Labour stands in the room of education; and fills up those vacancies of mind, which in a state of idleness would be ingrossed by vice. And if they, who have more leisure, do not substitute something in the room of this, their

their minds also will become the prey of vice; and the more so, as they have the means to indulge it more in their power. A vacant mind is exactly that house mentioned in the gospel, which the devil found empty. In he entered; and taking with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, they took possession. It is an undoubted truth, that one vice indulged, introduces others; and that each succeeding vice becomes more depraved.—If then the mind must be employed, what can fill up its vacuities more rationally than the acquisition of knowledge? Let us therefore thank God for the opportunities he hath afforded us; and not turn into a curse those means of leisure, which might become so great a blessing.

But however necessary to us knowledge may be, religion, we know, is infinitely

infinitely more so. The one adorns a man, and gives him, it is true, superiority, and rank in life: but the other is absolutely essential to his happiness.

In the midst of youth, health, and abundance, the world is apt to appear a very gay, and pleasing scene; it engages our desires; and in a degree satisfies them also. But it is wisdom to consider, that a time will come, when youth, health, and fortune will all fail us; and if disappointment, and vexation do not sour our taste for pleasure, at least sickness and infirmities will destroy it. In these gloomy seasons, and above all, at the approach of death, what will become of us without religion? When this world fails, where shall we fly, if we expect no refuge in another? Without holy hope in God, and resignation to his will, and trust in

him for deliverance, what is there that can secure us against the evils of life?

The great utility therefore of knowledge and religion being thus apparent, it is highly incumbent upon us to pay a studious attention to them in our youth. If we do not, it is more than probable, that we shall never do it; that we shall grow old in ignorance, by neglecting the one; and old in vice, by neglecting the other.

For improvement in knowledge, youth is certainly the fittest season. The mind is then ready to receive any impression. It is free from all that care, and attention, which, in riper age, the affairs of life bring with them. The memory too is then stronger; and better able to acquire the rudiments of knowledge; and as the mind is then
void

void of ideas, it is more suited to those parts of learning, which are conversant in words. Besides, there is sometimes in youth a modesty, and ductility, which in advanced years, if those years especially have been left a prey to ignorance, become self-sufficiency, and prejudice; and these effectually bar up all the inlets to knowledge.—But, above all, unless habits of attention, and application are early gained, we shall scarce acquire them afterwards.—The inconsiderate youth seldom reflects upon this; nor knows his loss, till he knows also, that it cannot be retrieved.

Nor is youth more the season to acquire knowledge, than to form religious habits. It is a great point to get habit on the side of virtue. It will make every thing smooth, and easy. The earliest principles are generally the most

lasting; and those of a religious cast are seldom wholly lost. Though the temptations of the world may, now and then, draw the well-principled youth aside; yet his principles being continually at war with his practice, there is hope, that in the end the better part may overcome the worse, and bring on a reformation. Whereas he, who has suffered habits of vice to get possession of his youth, has little chance of being brought back to a sense of religion. In a common course of things it can rarely happen. Some calamity must rouse him. He must be awakened by a storm, or sleep for ever.—How much better is it then to make that easy to us, which we know is best? And to form those habits now, which hereafter we shall wish we had formed?

There

There are, who would restrain youth from imbibing any religious principles, till they can judge for themselves ; lest they should imbibe prejudice for truth. But why should not the same caution be used in science also ; and the minds of youth left void of all impressions ? The experiment, I fear, in both cases would be dangerous. If the mind were left uncultivated during so long a period, though nothing else should find entrance, vice certainly would : and it would make the larger shoots, as the soil would be vacant. A boy had better receive knowledge and religion mixed with error, than none at all. For when the mind is set a thinking, it may deposit its prejudices by degrees, and get right at last : but in a state of stagnation it will infallibly become foul.

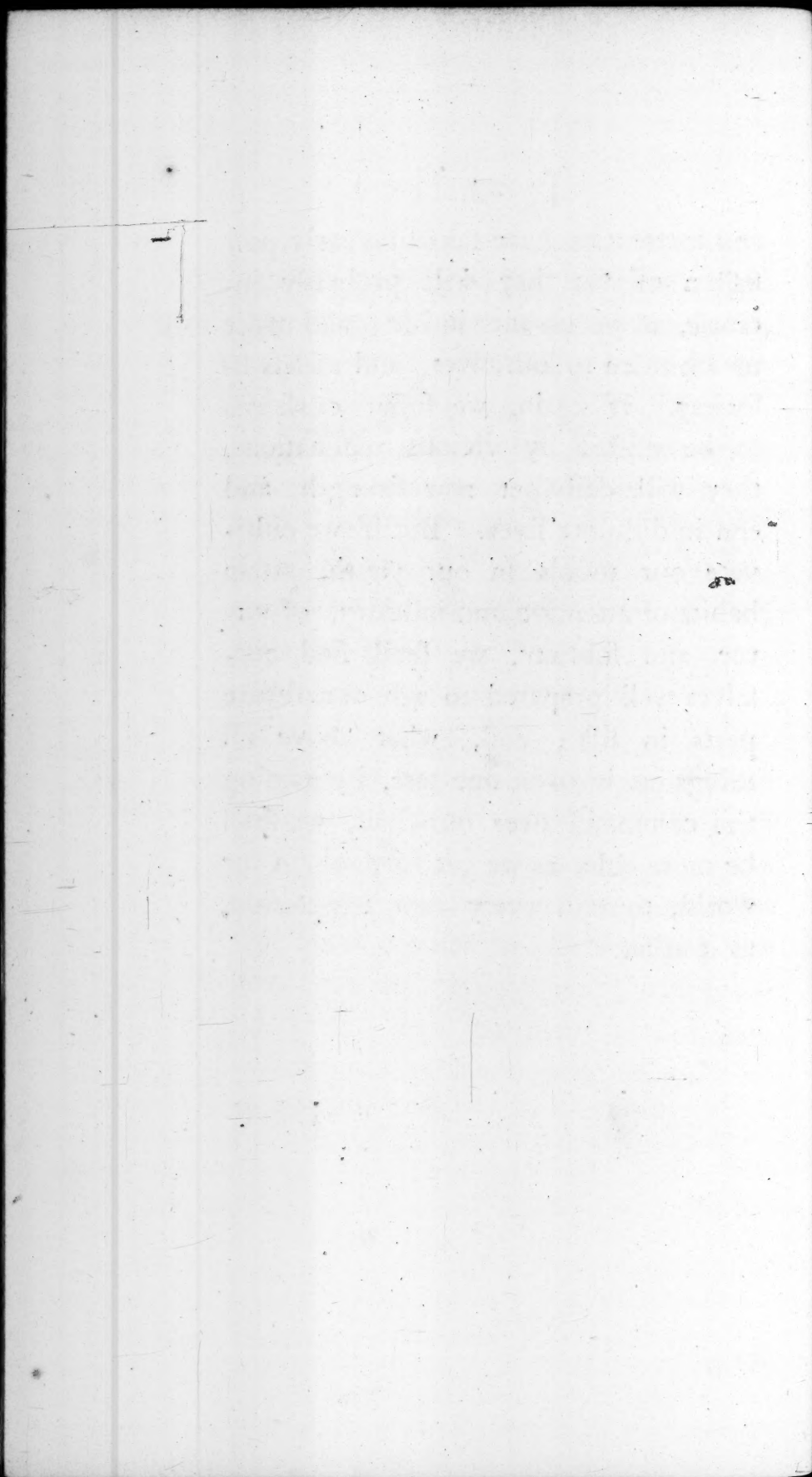
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To conclude, our youth bears the same proportion to our more advanced life, as this world does to the next. In this life we must form, and cultivate those habits of virtue, which must qualify us for a better state. If we neglect them here, and contract habits of an opposite kind, instead of gaining that exalted state, which is promised to our improvement, we shall of course sink into that state, which is adapted to the habits we have formed.

Exactly thus is youth introductory to manhood; to which it is properly speaking a state of preparation. During this season we must qualify ourselves for the parts we are to act hereafter. In manhood we bear the fruit, which has in youth been planted. If we have fauntered away our youth, we must expect to be ignorant men. If indolence
and

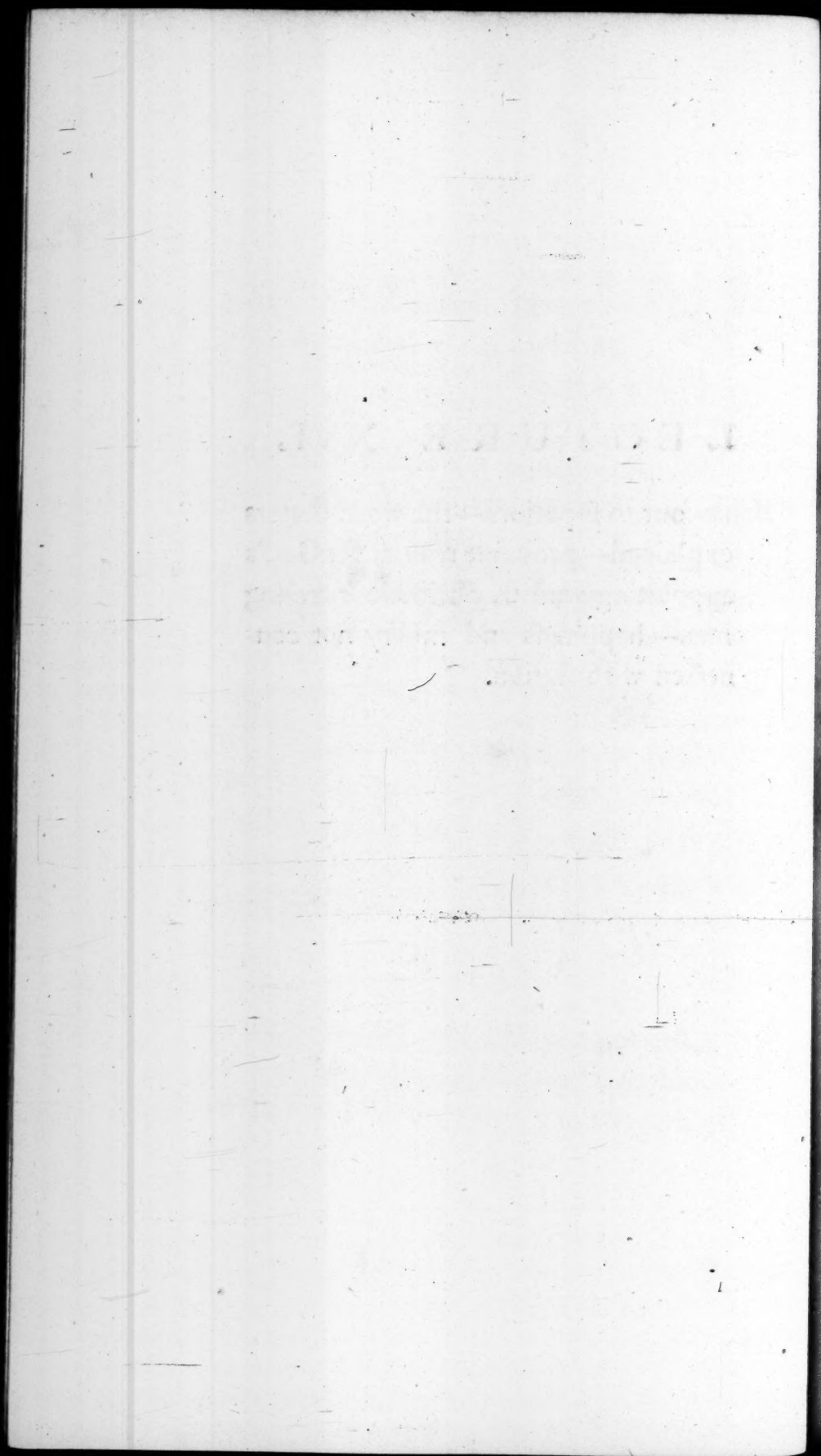
and inattention have taken an early possession of us, they will probably increase, as we advance in life; and make us a burden to ourselves, and useless to society. If again, we suffer ourselves to be misled by vicious inclinations, they will daily get new strength, and end in dissolute lives. But if we cultivate our minds in our youth, attain habits of attention and industry, of virtue, and sobriety, we shall find ourselves well prepared to act our future parts in life; and, what above all things ought to be our care, by gaining this command over ourselves, we shall be more able, as we get forward in the world, to resist every new temptation, as it arises.

L E C.



LECTURE XVI.

Behaviour to superiors—the word **better**s explained—probable reasons for God's appointing various distinctions among men—happiness and misery not connected with station.



WE are next enjoined “to order ourselves lowly and reverently, to all our betters.”

By our betters are meant they who are in a superior station of life to our own; and by “ordering ourselves lowly and reverently towards them,” is meant paying them that respect, which is due to their station.

The word betters indeed includes two kinds of persons, to whom our respect is due—those, who have a natural claim to it; and those who have an acquired one; that is, a claim arising from some particular situation in life.

Among the first, are all our superior relations; not only parents; but all other relations, who are in a line above
us.

us. All these have a natural claim to our respect.—There is a respect also due from youth to age; which is always becoming; and tends to keep youth within the bounds of modesty.

To others, respect is due from those particular stations, which arise from society and government. Fear God, says the text; and it adds, “honour the king.”

It is due also from many other situations in life. Employments, honours, and even wealth will exact it; and all may justly exact it, in a proper degree.

But it may here perhaps be inquired, why God should permit this latter distinction among men? That some should have more authority than others, we can easily see, is absolutely necessary in govern-

government; but among men, who are all born equal, why should the goods of life be distributed in so unequal a proportion?

To this inquiry, it may be answered, that, in the first place, we see nothing in this, but what is common in all the works of God. A gradation is every where observable. Beauty, strength; swiftness, and other qualities, are varied through the creation in numberless degrees. In the same manner likewise are varied the gifts of fortune, as they are called. Why therefore should one man's being richer than another, surprise us more than his being stronger than another, or more prudent?

Though we can but very inadequately trace the wisdom of God in his works, yet very wise reasons appear for this variety

variety in the gifts of fortune. It seems necessary both in a civil, and in a moral light.

In a civil light, it is the necessary accompaniment of various employments; on which depend all the advantages of society. Like the stones of a regular building, some must range higher, and some lower; some must support, and others be supported; some will form the strength of the building, and others its ornament; but all unite in producing one regular, and proportioned whole. If then different employments are necessary, of course different degrees of wealth, honour, and consequence must follow; a variety of distinctions, and obligations; in short, different ranks, and a subordination must take place.

Again,

Again in a moral light, the disproportion of wealth, and other worldly adjuncts gives a range to the more extensive exercise of virtue. Some virtues could but faintly exist upon the plan of an equality. If some did not abound, there were little room for temperance : if some did not suffer need, there were as little for patience. Other virtues again could hardly exist at all. Who could practise generosity, where there was no object of it? Who, humility, where all ambitious desires were excluded?

Since then providence, in scattering these various gifts, proposes ultimately the good of man, it is our duty to acquiesce in this order, and “to behave ourselves lowly, and reverently” (not with servility, but with a decent respect) “to all our superiors.”

Before

Before I conclude this subject, it may be proper to observe, in vindication of the ways of providence, that we are not to suppose happiness and misery necessarily connected with riches and poverty. Each condition hath its particular sources both of pleasure and pain, unknown to the other. Those in elevated stations have a thousand latent pangs, of which their inferiors have no idea: while their inferiors again have as many pleasures, which the others cannot taste. I speak only of such modes of happiness or misery as arise immediately from different stations. Of misery, indeed, from a variety of other causes, all men of every station are equal heirs; either when God lays his hand upon us in sickness, or misfortune; or when, by our own follies and vices, we become the ministers of our own distress.

Who

Who then would build his happiness upon an elevated station? Or who would envy the possession of such happiness in another? We know not with what various distresses that station, which is the object of our envy, may be attended.—Besides, as we are accountable for all we possess, it may be happy for us, that we possess so little.—The means of happiness, as far as station can procure them, are commonly in our own power, if we are not wanting to ourselves,

Let each of us then do his duty in that station which providence has assigned him; ever remembering, that the next world will soon destroy all earthly distinctions.—One distinction only will remain among the sons of men at that time—the distinction between good and bad; and this distinction it is worth all our pains and all our ambition to acquire.

LECTURE XVII,

The injury of words—evil-speaking—
lying—an equivocation—breach of
promise—slandering,

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WE are next instructed “to hurt nobody by word, or deed—to be true and just in all our dealings—to bear no malice nor hatred in our hearts—to keep our hands from picking and stealing—our tongues from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering.”

The duties comprehended in these words are a little transposed. What should class under one head is brought under another. “To hurt nobody by word, or deed,” is the general proposition. The under parts should follow: First, “to keep the tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering;” which is, “to hurt nobody by word.” Secondly, “to be true and just in all our dealings;” and “to keep our hands from picking and stealing;” which is, “to hurt nobody by deed.” As to the injunction,

injunction, "to bear no malice nor hatred in our hearts," it belongs properly to neither of these heads; but is a distinct one by itself. The duties being thus separated, I shall proceed to explain them.

And, first, of injuring our neighbour by our "words." This may be done, we find, in three ways; by "evil-speaking, by lying, and by flandering."

By "evil-speaking" is meant speaking ill of our neighbour; but upon a supposition, that this ill is the truth. In some circumstances it is certainly right to speak ill of our neighbour; as when we are called upon in a court of justice to give our evidence; or, when we can set any one right in his opinion of a person, in whom he is about to put an improper confidence. Nor can there
be

be any harm in speaking of a bad action, which has been determined in a court of justice, or is otherwise become notorious.

But, on the other hand, it is highly disallowable to speak wantonly of the characters of others from common fame; because, in a thousand instances, we find that stories, which have no better foundation, are misrepresented. They are perhaps only half-told—they have been heard through the medium of malice, or envy—some favourable circumstance hath been omitted—some foreign circumstance hath been added—some trifling circumstance hath been exaggerated—the motive, the provocation, or perhaps the reparation, hath been concealed—in short, the representation of the fact is, some way or other, totally different from the fact itself.

But

But even, when we have the best evidence of a bad action, with all its circumstances before us, we surely indulge a very ill-natured pleasure in spreading the shame of an offending brother. We can do no good; and we may do harm: we may weaken his good resolutions by exposing him: we may harden him against the world. Perhaps it may be his first bad action. Perhaps nobody is privy to it but ourselves. Let us give him at least one trial. Let us not cast the first stone. Which of our lives could stand so strict a scrutiny? He only who is without sin himself can have any excuse for treating his brother with severity.

Let us next consider "lying;" which is an intention to deceive by falsehood in our words.—To warn us against lying, we should do well to consider the folly,

folly, the meanness, and the wickedness of it.

The folly of lying consists in its defeating its own purpose. A habit of lying is generally in the end detected; and, after a detection, the liar, instead of deceiving, will not even be believed, when he happens to speak the truth. Nay, every single lie is attended with such a variety of circumstances, which lead to a detection, that it is often discovered. The use generally made of a lie is to cover a fault; but as the end is seldom answered, we only aggravate what we wish to conceal. In point even of prudence, an honest confession would serve us better.

The meanness of lying arises from the cowardice which it implies. We dare not boldly and nobly speak the truth;

truth ; but have recourse to low subterfuges, which always argue a sordid, and disingenuous mind. Hence it is, that in the fashionable world, the word liar is always considered as a term of peculiar reproach.

The wickedness of lying consists in its perverting one of the greatest blessings of God, the use of speech, in making that a mischief to mankind, which was intended for a benefit. Truth is the great bond of society. Falshood, of course, tends to its dissolution. If one man may lye, why not another? And if there is no mutual trust among men, there is an end of all intercourse and dealing.

An equivocation is nearly related to a lye. It is an intention to deceive under words of a double meaning ; or
words,

words, which, literally speaking, are true, and is equally criminal with the most downright breach of truth. When St. Peter asked Sapphira (in the 5th chapter of the Acts) “ whether her husband had sold the land for so much ? ” She answered, he had : and literally she spoke the truth : for he had sold it for that sum, included in a larger. But having an intention to deceive, we find the apostle considered the equivocation as a lye.

In short, it is the intention to deceive, which is criminal : the mode of deception, like the vehicle in which poison is conveyed, is of no consequence. A nod, or sign, may convey a lye as effectually, as the most deceitful language.

Under the head of lying may be mentioned a breach of promise. While a resolution

solution remains in our own breasts, it is subject to our own review : but when we make another person a party with us, an engagement is made ; and every engagement, though only of the lightest kind, should be punctually observed. If we have added to this engagement a solemn promise, the obligation is so much the stronger ; and he who does not think himself bound by such an obligation, has no pretensions to the character of an honest man. A breach of promise is still worse than a lye. A lye is, simply a breach of truth : but a breach of promise, is a breach both of truth and trust.

Forgetfulness is a weak excuse. It only shews how little we are affected by so solemn an engagement. Should we forget to call for a sum of money, of which we were in want, at an appointed time ?

time? Or do we think a solemn promise of less value, than a sum of money?

Having considered evil-speaking and lying, let us next consider slandering. By slandering we mean, injuring our neighbour's character by falsehood. Here we still rise higher in the scale of injurious words. Slandering our neighbour is the greatest injury, which words can do him; and is, therefore, worse than either evil-speaking, or lying. The mischief of this sin depends on the value of our characters. All men, unless they be past feeling, desire naturally to be thought well of by their fellow-creatures; a good character is one of the principal means of being serviceable either to ourselves, or others; and among numbers, the very bread they eat, depends upon it. What aggravated injury,

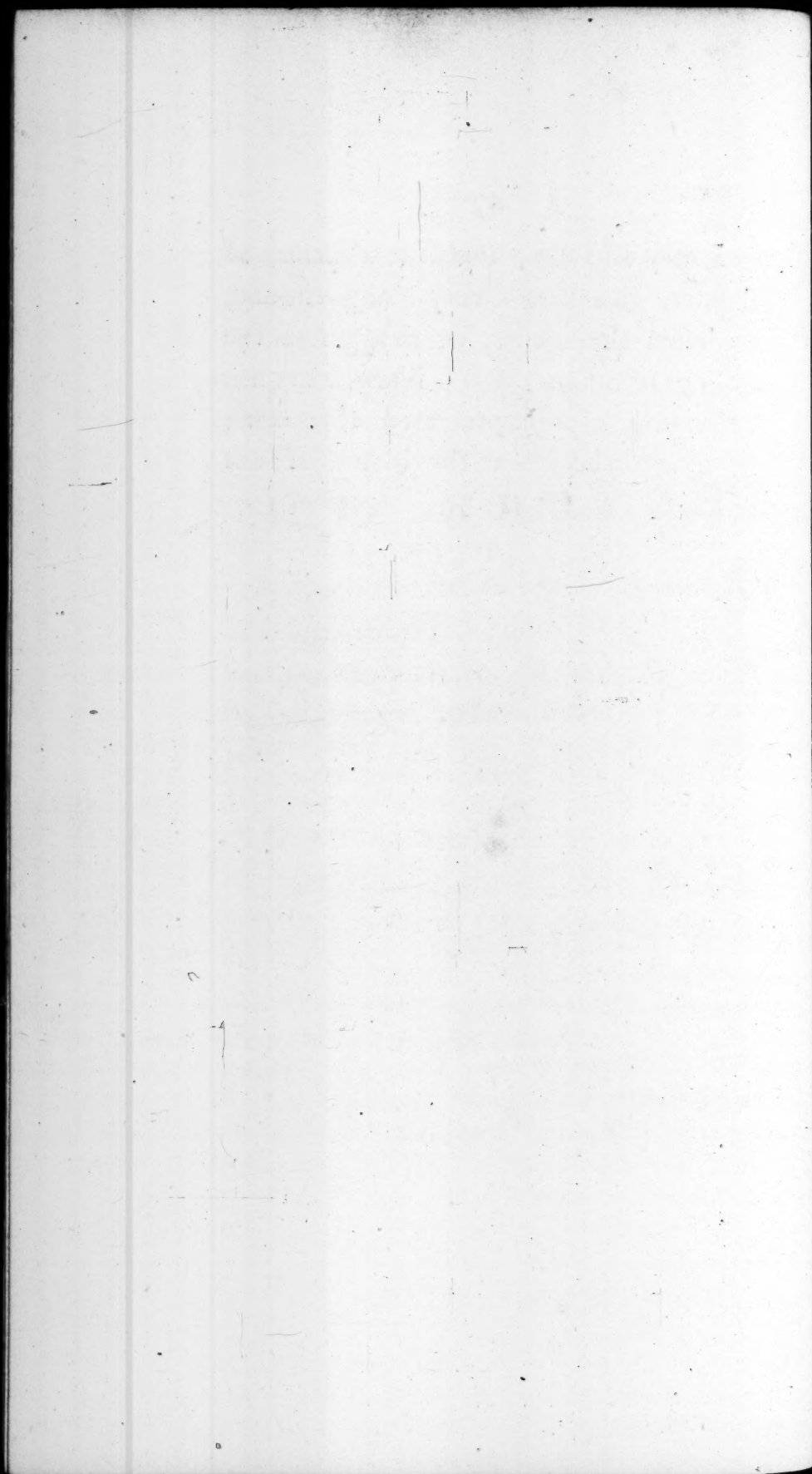
ry, therefore, do we bring upon every man, whose name we slander? And, what is still worse, the injury is irreparable. If you defraud a man; restore what you took, and the injury is repaired. But, if you slander him, it is not in your power to shut up all the ears, and all the mouths, to which your tale may have access. The evil spreads, like the winged seeds of some noxious plants, which scatter mischief on a breath of air, and disperse it on every side, and beyond prevention.

Before we conclude this subject, it may just be mentioned, that a slander may be spread, as a lye may be told, in various ways. We may do it by an insinuation, as well as in a direct manner: we may spread it in a secret; or propagate it under the colour of friendship.

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I may add also, that it is a species of slander, and often a very malignant one, to lessen the merits, or exaggerate the failings of others ; as it is likewise to omit defending a misrepresented character ; or to let others bear the blame of our offences.

L E C-



LECTURE XVIII.

Injurious actions—law and justice different things—illustrated by several instances—malice and hatred arising from the resentment of injuries—arising from envy.

LECTURE XVIII.

injurious actions—law and justice distinguished—illustrated by several instances—practice and theory—concluding remarks on the treatment of injuries—final chapter.

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HAVING thus considered injurious words, let us next consider injurious actions. On this head we are enjoined “to keep our hands from picking and stealing, and to be true and just in all our dealings.”

As to theft, it is a crime of so odious, and vile a nature, that one would imagine no person, who hath had the least tincture of a virtuous education, even though driven to necessity, could be led into it.—I shall not, therefore, enter into a dissuasive from this crime; but go on with the explanation of the other part of the injunction, and see what it is to be true and just in all our dealings.

Justice is even still more, if possible, the support of society, than truth : in-

asmuch as a man may be more injurious by his actions, than by his words. It is for this reason, that the whole force of human law is bent to restrain injustice; and the happiness of every society will increase, in proportion to this restraint.

We very much err, however, if we suppose, that every thing within the bounds of law is justice. The law was intended only for bad men; and it is impossible to make the meshes of it so strait, but that many very great enormities will escape. The well meaning man, therefore, knowing, that the law was not made for him, consults a better guide—his own conscience, informed by religion. And, indeed, the great difference between the good and the bad man consists in this: the good man will do nothing, but what his conscience will

will allow: the bad man will do any thing, which the law cannot reach.

It would, indeed, be endless to describe the various ways, in which a man may be dishonest within the limits of law. They are as various, as our intercourse with mankind. Some of the most obvious of them I shall cursorily mention.

In matters of commerce the knave has many opportunities. The different qualities of the same commodity—the different modes of adulteration—the specious arts of vending—the frequent ignorance in purchasing; and a variety of other circumstances, open an endless field to the ingenuity of fraud. The honest fair-dealer, in the mean time, has only one rule, which is, that all arts, however common in business, which
are

are intended to deceive, are utterly unlawful. It may be added, upon this head, that if any one, conscious of having been a transgressor, is desirous of repairing his fault, restitution is by all means necessary : till that be done, he continues in a course of injustice.

Again, in matters of contract, a man has many opportunities of being dishonest within the bounds of law. He may be strict in observing the letter of an agreement, when the equitable meaning requires a laxer interpretation : or, he can take the laxer interpretation, when it serves his purpose ; and at the loophole of some ambiguous expression, exclude the literal meaning, though it be undoubtedly the true one.

The same iniquity appears in withholding from another his just right ;
or

or in putting him to expence, in recovering it. The movements of the law are slow ; and in many cases cannot be otherwise : but he who takes the advantage of this to injure his neighbour, proves himself an undoubted knave.

It is a species of the same kind of injustice to withhold a debt, when we have ability to pay ; or to run into debt, when we have not that ability. The former can proceed only from a bad disposition : the latter, from suffering our desires to exceed our station. Some are excused, on this head, as men of generous principles, which they cannot confine. But what is their generosity ? They assist one man by injuring another. And what good arises to society from hence ? Such persons cannot act on principle ; and we need not hesitate to rank them with those, who run into debt

debt to gratify their own selfish inclinations. One man desires the elegancies of life ; another desires what he thinks an equal good, the reputation of generosity.

Oppression is another species of injustice ; by which, in a thousand ways, under the cover of law, we may take the advantage of the superiority of our power, either to crush an inferior, or humble him to our designs.

Ingratitude is another. A loan, we know, claims a legal return. And is the obligation less, if, instead of a loan, you receive a kindness ? The law, indeed, says nothing on this point of immorality ; but an honest conscience will be very loud in the condemnation of it.

We

We may be unjust also in our resentment ; by carrying it beyond what reason and religion prescribe.

But it would be endless to describe the various ways, in which injustice discovers itself. In truth, almost every omission of duty may be resolved into injustice.

The next precept is, “ to bear no malice, nor hatred in our hearts.”

The malice and hatred of our hearts arise, in the first place, from injurious treatment ; and surely no man, when he is injured, can at first help feeling that he is so. But Christianity requires, that we should subdue these feelings, as soon as possible ; “ and not suffer the sun to go down upon our wrath.” Various are the passages of scripture, which inculcate

inculcate the forgiveness of injuries. Indeed, no point is more laboured than this ; and with reason, because no temper is more productive of evil, both to ourselves and others, than a malicious one. The sensations of a mind burning with revenge, are beyond description : and as we are at these seasons very unable to judge coolly ; and of course, liable to carry our resentment too far, the consequence is, that, in our rage, we may do a thousand things, which can never be atoned for ; and of which we may repent as long as we live.

Besides, one act draws on another ; and retaliation keeps the quarrel alive. The gospel, therefore, ever gracious, and kind to man, in all its precepts, enjoins us to check all these violent emotions ; and to leave our cause in the hands of God. “ Vengeance is mine,
“ I will

I will repay, saith the Lord :” and he, who, in opposition to this precept, takes vengeance into his own hands, and cherishes the malice and hatred of his heart, may assure himself, that he has not yet learned to be a Christian. These precepts, perhaps, may not entirely agree with modern principles of honour : but let the man of honour see to that. The maxims of the world cannot change the truth of the gospel.

Nay, even in recovering our just right, or in pursuing a criminal to justice, we should take care, that it be not done in the spirit of retaliation and revenge. If these be our motives, though we make the law our instrument, we are equally guilty.

But besides injurious treatment, the malice and hatred of our hearts have

have often another source, and that is envy: and thus in the litany, "envy, malice, and hatred," are all joined together with great propriety. The emotions of envy are generally cooler, and less violent, than those which arise from the resentment of injury; so that envy is seldom so mischievous in its effects as revenge: but with regard to ourselves, it is altogether as bad, and full as destructive of the spirit of christianity. What is the religion of that man, who instead of thanking heaven for the blessings he receives, is fretting himself continually with a disagreeable comparison between himself and some other? He cannot enjoy what he has, because another has more wealth, a fairer fame, or perhaps more merit, than himself. He is miserable, because others are happy.

But

But to omit the wickedness of envy, how absurd and foolish is it, in a world where we must necessarily expect much real misery, to be perniciously inventive in producing it?

Besides, what ignorance! We see only the glaring outside of things. Under all that envied glare, many unseen distresses may lurk, from which our station may be free: for our merciful creator seems to have bestowed happiness, as far as station is concerned, with great equality among all his creatures.

In conclusion, therefore, let it be the great object of our attention, and the subject of our prayers, to rid our minds of all this cursed intrusion of evil thoughts—whether they proceed from malice, or from an envious temper. Let all our malicious thoughts soften
into

into charity and benevolence; and let us “forgive one another, as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven us.” As for our envious thoughts, as far as they relate to externals, let them subside in humility, acquiescence, and submission to the will of God. And when we are tempted to envy the good qualities of others, let us spurn so base a conception, and change it into a generous emulation—into an endeavour to raise ourselves to an equality with our rival, not to depress him to a level with us.

L E C.

LECTURE XIX.

Duties owing to ourselves—temperance
—sobriety—chastity—rules for pre-
serving the purity of our thoughts,
words, and actions.

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THUS far the duties we have considered, come most properly under the head of those which we owe to our neighbour; what follows, relates rather to ourselves. On this head, we are instructed “to keep our bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity.”

Though our souls should be our great concern, yet, as they are nearly connected with our bodies, and as the impurity of the one contaminates the other, a great degree of moral attention is, of course, due to our bodies also.

As our first station is in this world, to which our bodies particularly belong, they are formed with such appetites, as are requisite to our commodious living in it; and the rule given us is, “to use the world so as not to abuse it.” St.

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Paul,

Paul, by a beautiful allusion, calls our bodies the “temples of the Holy Ghost :” by which he means to impress us with a strong idea of their dignity ; and to deter us from debasing by low pleasures, what should be the seat of so much purity. To youth these cautions are above measure necessary, because their passions and appetites are strong ; their reason and judgement weak. They are prone to pleasure, and void of reflection. How, therefore, these young adventurers in life may best steer their course, and use this sinful world so as not to abuse it, is a consideration well worth their attention. Let us then see under what regulations their appetites should be restrained.

By keeping our bodies in temperance is meant avoiding excess in eating, with regard both to the quantity and quality
of

of our food. We should neither eat more than our stomachs can well bear; nor be nice and delicate in our eating.

To preserve the body in health is the end of eating; and they who regulate themselves merely by this end, who eat without choice or distinction, paying no regard to the pleasure of eating, observe perhaps the best rule of temperance. They go rather indeed beyond temperance, and may be called abstemious. A man may be temperate, and yet allow himself a little more indulgence. Great care, however, is here necessary; and the more, as perhaps no precise rule can be affixed, after we have passed the first 'great limit, and let the palate loose among variety.* Our own discre-

F 2 tion

* ————— *Nam varia res,
Ut noceant homini, credas memor illius esca,*

24E

tion must be our guide, which should be constantly kept awake by considering the many bad consequences, which attend a breach of temperance.—Young men, in the full vigour of health, do not consider these things; but as age comes on, and different maladies begin to appear, they may perhaps repent, they did not, a little earlier, practise the rules of temperance.

In a moral and religious light, the consequences of intemperance are still worse. To enjoy a comfortable meal, when it comes before us, is allowable: but he who suffers his mind to dwell upon the pleasures of eating, and makes

*Quæ simplex olim tibi federit. At simul affis
Miscueris elixa, simul conchyliis turdis
Dulcia se in bilem vertent, stomachoque tumultum
Lenta feret pituita.*—————

Hor.

them

them the employment of his thoughts; has at least opened one source of mental corruption. *

After all, he who would most perfectly enjoy the pleasures of the table, such as they are, must look for them within the rules of temperance. The palate accustomed to satiety hath lost its tone; and the greatest sensualists have been brought to confess, that the coarsest fare, with an appetite kept in order by temperance, affords a more delicious repast, than the most luxurious meal without it.

As temperance relates chiefly to eating, soberness or sobriety relates pro-

* ————— *Corpus onustum*

*Hesternis vitiis, animum quoq. pręgravat una,
Atq. affigit humo divinę particulam aurę.*

Hor. Sat.

perly to drinking. And here the same observations recur. The strictest, and perhaps the best rule, is merely to satisfy the end of drinking. But if a little more indulgence be taken, it ought to be taken with the greatest circumspection.

With regard to youth indeed, I should be inclined to great strictness on this head. In eating, if they eat of proper and simple food, they cannot easily err. Their growing limbs, and strong exercise, require larger supplies than full-grown bodies, which must be kept in order by a more rigid temperance. But if more indulgence be allowed them in eating, less, surely, should in drinking. With strong liquors of every kind they have nothing to do; and if they should totally abstain on this head, it were so much the better. The languor
which

which attends age,* requires perhaps, now and then, some aids; but the spirits of youth want no recruits: a little rest is sufficient.

As to the bad consequences derived from excessive drinking, besides filling the blood with bloated and vicious humours, and debauching the purity of the mind, as in the case of intemperate eating, it is attended with this peculiar evil, the loss of our senses. Hence follow frequent inconveniences and mortifications. We expose our follies—we betray our secrets—we are often imposed upon—we quarrel with our friends—we lay ourselves open to our enemies; and, in short, make ourselves the ob-

* ————— *Ubiue*

Accedant anni, et tractari mollius ætas

Imbecilla volet. —————

Hor. Sat.

jects

jects of contempt, and the topics of ridicule to all our acquaintance.—Nor is it only the act of intoxication which deprives us of our reason during the prevalence of it; the habit of drunkenness soon besots and impairs the understanding, and renders us at all times less fit for the offices of life.

We are next enjoined “to keep our bodies in chastity.” “Flee youthful lusts,” says the apostle, “which war against the soul.” And there is surely nothing which carries on a war against the soul more successfully. Wherever we have a catalogue in scripture (and we have many such catalogues) of those sins, which in a peculiar manner debauch the mind, these youthful lusts have always, under some denomination, a place among them.—To keep ourselves free from all contagion of this kind,

kind, let us endeavour to preserve a purity in our thoughts—our words—and our actions.

First, let us preserve a purity in our thoughts. These dark recesses, which the eye of the world cannot reach, are the receptacles of these youthful lusts. Here they find their first encouragement. The entrance of such impure ideas perhaps we cannot always prevent. We may always however prevent cherishing them: we may always prevent their making an impression upon us: the devil may be cast out, as soon as discovered.

Let us always keep in mind, that even into these dark abodes the eye of heaven can penetrate: that every thought of our hearts is open to that God, before whom we must one day stand;

stand; and that however secretly we may indulge these impure ideas, at the great day of account, they will certainly appear in an awful detail against us.

Let us remember again, that if our bodies be the temples of the Holy Ghost, our minds are the very sanctuaries of those temples: and if there be any weight in the apostle's argument against polluting our bodies, it urges with double force against polluting our minds.

But above all other considerations, it behoves us most to keep our thoughts pure, because they are the fountains from which our words and actions flow. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Obscene words and actions are only bad thoughts matured; and spring as naturally from them,

them, as the plant from its seed. It is the same vicious depravity carried a step farther; and only shews a more confirmed, and a more mischievous degree of guilt. While we keep our impurities in our thoughts, they debauch only ourselves: bad enough, it is true. But when we proceed to words and actions, we let our impurities loose: we spread the contagion, and become the corrupters of others.

Let it be our first care, therefore, to keep our thoughts pure. If we do this, our words and actions will be pure of course. And that we may be the better enabled to do it, let us use such helps as reason and religion prescribe. Let us avoid all company, and all books, that have a tendency to corrupt our minds; and every thing that can inflame our passions. He who allows
himself

himself in these things, holds a parley with vice; which will infallibly debauch him in the end, if he do not take the alarm in time, and break off such dalliance.

One thing ought to be our particular care, and that is, never to be unemployed. Ingenious amusements are of great use in filling up the vacuities of our time. Idle we should never be. A vacant mind is an invitation to vice.

L E C-

LECTURE XX.

Covetousness the source of wickedness and misery—a desiring frame of mind—covetousness consistent with prodigality—particularly to be restrained in youth—duties of each station—an active, useful life recommended—the proper motive to such a life.

WE are forbidden, next, “to covet, or desire other men’s goods.”

There are two great paths of vice, into which bad men commonly strike; that of unlawful pleasure, and that of unlawful gain.—The path of unlawful pleasure we have just examined; and have seen the danger of obeying the headstrong impulse of our appetites.—We have considered also an immoderate love of gain, and have seen dishonesty and fraud in a variety of shapes. But we have yet viewed them only as they relate to society. We have viewed only the outward action. The rule before us, “We must not covet, nor desire other men’s goods,” comes a step nearer home, and considers the motive which governs the action.

Covetousness,

Covetousness, or the love of money, is called in scripture "the root of all evil:" and it is called so for two reasons; because it makes us wicked, and because it makes us miserable.

First, it makes us wicked. When it once gets possession of the heart, it will let no good principle flourish near it. Most vices have their fits; and when the violence of the passion is spent, there is some interval of calm. The vicious appetite cannot always run riot. It is fatigued at least by its own impetuosity: and it is possible, that in this moment of tranquillity, a whisper from virtue may be heard. But in avarice, there is rarely intermission. It hangs, like a dead weight upon the soul, always pulling it to earth. We might as well expect to see a plant grow

grow upon a flint, as a virtue in the heart of a miser.

It makes us miserable as well as wicked. The cares and the fears of avarice are proverbial; and it must needs be that he, who depends for happiness on what is liable to a thousand accidents, must of course feel as many distresses, and almost as many disappointments. The good man depends for happiness on something more permanent; and if his worldly affairs go ill, his great dependance is still left. * But as wealth is the only god which the covetous man worships, (for "covetousness," we are told, "is idolatry,") a disappointment here, is a disappoint-

* *Sæviat, atq. novos moveat fortuna tumultus;
Quantum hinc imminuet?* —————

Hor. Sat.

ment indeed. Be he ever so prosperous, his wealth cannot secure him against the evils of mortality; against that time, when he must give up all he values; when his bargains of advantage will be over, and nothing left but tears and despair.

But even a desiring frame of mind, tho it be not carried to such a length, is always productive of misery. It cannot be otherwise. While we suffer ourselves to be continually in quest of what we have not, it is impossible that we should be happy with what we have. In a word, to abridge our wants as much as possible, not to increase them, is the truest happiness.

We are much mistaken, however, if we think the man who hoards up his money, is the only covetous man. The prodigal,

prodigal, though he differ in his end, may be as avaritious in his means.* The former denies himself every comfort; the latter grasps at every pleasure. Both characters are equally bad in different extremes. The miser is more detestable in the eyes of the world, because he enters into none of its joys; but it is a question, which is more wretched in himself, or more pernicious to society.

As covetousness is esteemed the vice of age, every appearance of it among young persons ought particularly to be discouraged; because, if it gets ground at this early period, nobody can tell how far it may not afterwards proceed. And yet, on the other side, there may

* *Alieni appetens, sui profusus.*

Sal. de Catil.

be great danger of encouraging the opposite extreme. As it is certainly right, under proper restrictions, both to save our money, and to spend it, it would be highly useful to fix the due bounds on each side. But nothing is more difficult than to raise these nice limits between extremes. Every man's case, in a thousand circumstances, differs from his neighbour's : and as no rule can be fixed for all ; every man, of course, in these disquisitions, must be left to his own conscience. We are all indeed very ready to give our opinions how others ought to act. We can adjust with great nicety, what is proper for them to do ; and point out their mistakes with much precision : while nothing is necessary to us, but to act as properly as as we can ourselves ; observing as just a mean as possible between prodigality and avarice ; and applying, in all our difficulties,

difficulties, to the word of God, where these great land-marks of morality are the most accurately fixed.

We have now taken a view of what is prohibited in our commerce with mankind: let us next see what is enjoined. (We are still proceeding with those duties, which we owe to ourselves.) Instead of spending our fortune therefore in unlawful pleasure, or increasing it by unlawful gain; we are required "to learn, and labour truly (that is honestly) to get our own living, and to do our duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call us."—These words will be sufficiently explained by considering, first, that we all have some station in life—some particular duties to discharge; and secondly, in what manner we ought to discharge them.

First,

First, that man was not born to be idle, may be inferred from the active spirit, that appears in every part of nature. Every thing is alive; every thing contributes to the general good: even the very inanimate parts of the creation, plants, stones, metals, cannot be called totally inactive; but bear their part likewise in the general usefulness. If then every part, even of inanimate nature, be thus employed, surely we cannot suppose it was the intention of the almighty father, that man, who is the most capable of employing himself properly, should be the only creature without employment.

Again, that man was born for active life, is plain from the necessity of labour. If it had not been necessary, God would not originally have imposed it. But without it, the body would become
 enervated,

enervated, and the mind corrupted. Idleness therefore is justly esteemed the origin, both of disease and vice. So that if labour, and employment, either of body, or mind, had no use, but what respected ourselves, they would be highly proper : but they have farther use.

The necessity of them is plain, from the want that all men have of the assistance of others. If so, this assistance should be mutual ; every man should contribute his part. We have already seen, that it is proper, there should be different stations in the world,—that some should be placed high in life, and others low. The lowest, we know, cannot be exempt from labour ; and the highest ought not : though their labour, according to their station, will be of a different kind. Some, we see, “ must labour

bour (as the catechism phrases it) to get their own living; and others should do their duty in that state of life, whatever that state is, unto which it hath pleased God to call them." All are assisted: all should assist. God distributes, we read, various talents among men; to some he gives five talents, to others two, and to others one: but it is expected, we find, that notwithstanding this inequality, each should employ the talent that is given, to the best advantage: and he, who received five talents, was under the same obligation of improving them, as he who had received only one; and would, if he had hid his talents in the earth, have been punished, in proportion to the abuse. Every man, even in the highest station, may find a proper employment, both for his time and fortune, if he please: and he may assure himself, that God, by placing
him

him in that station, never meant to exempt him from the common obligations of society, and give him a licence to spend his life in ease and pleasure. God meant assuredly, that he should bear his part in the general commerce of life,—that he should consider himself not as an individual, but as a member of the community; the interests of which he is under an obligation to support, with all his power;—and that his elevated station gives him no other pre-eminence, than that of being the more extensively useful.

Having thus seen, that we have all some station in life to support—some particular duties to discharge; let us now see in what manner we ought to discharge them.

We

We have an easy rule given us in scripture, on this head; that all our duties in life should be performed “as to the Lord, and not unto man:” that is, we should consider our stations in life, as trusts reposed in us by our maker, and as such should discharge the duties of them. What, though no worldly trust be reposed? What, though we are accountable to nobody upon earth? Can we therefore suppose ourselves in reality less accountable? Can we suppose, that God, for no reason that we can divine, has singled us out, and given us a large proportion of the things of this world, (while others around us are in need), for no other purpose than to squander it away upon ourselves? To God undoubtedly we are accountable for every blessing we enjoy. What mean, in scripture, the talents given, and the use

use assigned; but the conscientious discharge of the duties of life, according to the advantages, with which they are attended?

It matters not whether these advantages be an inheritance, or an acquisition: still they are the gift of God. Agreeably to their rank in life, it is true, all men should live: human distinctions require it; and in doing this properly, every one around will be benefited. Utility should be considered in all our expences. Even the very amusements of a man of fortune should be founded in it.

In short, it is the constant injunction of scripture, in whatever station we are placed, to consider ourselves as God's servants; and as acting immediately under his eye; not expecting our reward
among

among men ; but from our great master who is in heaven. This sanctifies, in a manner, all our actions : it places the little difficulties of our station in the light of God's appointments; and turns the most common duties of life into acts of religion.

LECTURE XXI.

Bad company—meaning of the phrase—
different classes of bad company—ill-
chosen company—what is meant by
keeping bad company—the danger of
it from our aptness to imitate and
catch the manners of others—from
the great power and force of custom
—from our own bad inclinations,

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WE have now gone through our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves; and should proceed, in the order pointed out in the catechism, to consider the lord's prayer: but it will not, perhaps, be amiss to step a little aside, and but a little, for the sake of one lesson on a subject, which to youth is very important; and without the observance of which, every station will be attended with its peculiar danger: the lesson I mean respects the danger of keeping bad company.

“ Evil communication, says the text, corrupts good manners.” The assertion is general: and no doubt all people suffer from such communication; but above all, the minds of youth will suffer; which are yet unformed, unprincipled,

ciplcd, unfurnished; and ready to receive any impression.

But before we consider the danger of keeping bad company, let us first see the meaning of the phrase.

In the phrase of the world, good company means fashionable people. Their stations in life, not their morals are considered: and he, who associates with such, though they set him the example of breaking every commandment of the decalogue, is still said to keep good company.—I should wish you to fix another meaning to the expression; and to consider vice in the same detestable light, in whatever company it is found; nay, to consider all company in which it is found, be their station what it will, as bad company.

The

The three following classes will perhaps include the greatest part of those, who deserve this appellation.

In the first, I should rank all who endeavour to destroy the principles of christianity—who jest upon scripture—talk blasphemy—and treat revelation with contempt.

A second class of bad company are those, who have a tendency to destroy in us the principles of common honesty and integrity. Under this head, we may rank gamesters of every denomination; and the low, and infamous characters of every profession,

A third class of bad company, and such as are commonly most dangerous to youth, includes the long catalogue of men of pleasure. In whatever way

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they

they follow the call of appetite, they have equally a tendency to corrupt the purity of the mind.

Besides these three classes, whom we may call bad company, there are others who come under the denomination of ill-chosen company: trifling, insipid characters of every kind; who follow no business—are led by no ideas of improvement—but spend their time in dissipation and folly—whose highest praise it is, that they are only not vicious.—With none of these, a serious man would wish his son to keep company.

It may be asked what is meant by keeping bad company? The world abounds with characters of this kind: they meet us in every place; and if we keep company

pany at all, it is impossible to avoid keeping company with such persons.

It is true, if we were determined never to have any commerce with bad men, we must, as the apostle remarks, "altogether go out of the world." By keeping bad company, therefore is not meant a casual intercourse with them, on occasion of business; or as they accidentally fall in our way; but having an inclination to consort with them—complying with that inclination—seeking their company, when we might avoid it—entering into their parties—and making them the companions of our choice. Mixing with them occasionally, cannot be avoided.

The danger of keeping bad company, arises principally from our aptness to imitate and catch the manners and sen-

timents of others—from the power of custom—from our own bad inclinations—and from the pains taken by the bad to corrupt us. *

In our earliest youth, the contagion of manners is observable. In the boy, yet incapable of having any thing instilled into him, we easily discover from his first actions, and rude attempts at language, the kind of persons, with whom he has been brought up: we see the early spring of a civilized education; or the first wild shoots of rusticity.

As he enters farther into life, his behaviour, manners, and conversation, all take their cast from the company he keeps. Observe the peasant, and the man of education; the difference is

* See this subject treated more at large in an anonymous pamphlet, on the employment of time.

striking.

striking. And yet God hath bestowed equal talents on each. The only difference is, they have been thrown into different scenes of life; and have had commerce with persons of different stations.

Nor are manners and behaviour more easily caught; than opinions, and principles. In childhood and youth, we naturally adopt the sentiments of those about us. And as we advance in life, how few of us think for ourselves? How many of us are satisfied with taking our opinions at second hand?

The great power, and force of custom forms another argument against keeping bad company. However seriously disposed we may be; and however shocked at the first approaches of vice; this shocking appearance goes off, upon an intimacy

intimacy with it. Custom will soon render the most disgustful thing familiar. And this is indeed a kind provision of nature, to render labour, and toil, and danger, which are the lot of man, more easy to him. The raw soldier, who trembles at the first encounter, becomes a hardy veteran in a few campaigns. Habit renders danger familiar, and of course indifferent to him.

But habit, which is intended for our good, may, like other kind appointments of nature, be converted into a mischief. The well-disposed youth, entering first into bad company, is shocked at what he hears, and what he sees. The good principles, which he had imbibed, ring in his ears an alarming lesson against the wickedness of his companions. But, alas ! this sensibility is but of a day's continuance. The next jovial

jovial meeting makes the horrid picture of yesterday more easily endured. Virtue is soon thought a severe rule; the gospel, an inconvenient restraint: a few pangs of conscience now and then interrupt his pleasures; and whisper to him, that he once had better thoughts: but even these by degrees die away; and he who at first was shocked even at the appearance of vice, is formed by custom, into a profligate leader of vicious pleasures—perhaps into an abandoned tempter to vice.—So carefully should we oppose the first approaches of sin! so vigilant should we be against so insidious an enemy!

Our own bad inclinations form another argument against bad company. We have so many passions and appetites to govern; so many bad propensities of different kinds to watch, that, amidst
such

such a variety of enemies within, we ought at least to be on our guard against those without. The breast even of a good man is represented in scripture, and experienced in fact, to be in a state of warfare. His vicious inclinations are continually drawing him one way; while his virtue is making efforts another. And if the scriptures represent this as the case even of a good man, whose passions, it may be imagined, are become in some degree cool, and temperate, and who has made some progress in a virtuous course; what may we suppose to be the danger of a raw unexperienced youth, whose passions and appetites are violent and seducing, and whose mind is in a still less confirmed state? It is his part surely to keep out of the way of temptation; and to give his bad inclinations as little room as possible, to acquire new strength.

L E C.

LECTURE XXII.

Ridicule one of the chief arts of corruption—bad company injures our characters, as well as manners—presumption the forerunner of ruin—the advantages of good company equal to the disadvantages of bad—cautions in forming intimacies.

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THESE arguments against keeping bad company, will still receive additional strength; if we consider farther, the great pains taken by the bad to corrupt others. It is a very true, but lamentable fact, in the history of human nature, that bad men take more pains to corrupt their own species, than virtuous men do to reform them. Hence those specious arts, that show of friendship, that appearance of disinterestedness, with which the profligate seducer endeavours to lure the unwary youth; and at the same time, yielding to his inclinations, seems to follow rather than to lead him. Many are the arts of these corrupters; but their principal art is ridicule. By this they endeavour to laugh out of countenance all the better principles of their wavering proselyte; and make him think contemptibly of those,

those, whom he formerly respected : by this they stifle the ingenuous blush ; and finally destroy all sense of shame. Their cause is below argument. They aim not therefore at reasoning. Raillery is the weapon they employ ; and who is there, that hath the steadiness to hear persons and things, whatever reverence he may have had for them, the subject of continual ridicule, without losing that reverence by degrees ?

Having thus considered what principally makes bad company dangerous, I shall just add, that even were your morals in no danger from such intercourse, your characters would infallibly suffer. The world will always judge of you by your companions : and nobody will suppose, that a youth of virtuous principles himself, can possibly form a connection with a profligate.

In

In reply to the danger supposed to arise from bad company, perhaps the youth may say, he is so firm in his own opinions, so steady in his principles, that he thinks himself secure ; and need not restrain himself from the most unreserved conversation.

Alas ! this security is the very brink of the precipice : nor hath vice in her whole train a more dangerous enemy to you, than presumption. Caution, ever awake to danger, is a guard against it. But security lays every guard asleep. " Let him who thinketh, he standeth," saith the apostle, " take heed, lest he fall." Even an apostle himself did fall, by thinking, that he stood secure. " Though I should die with thee," said St. Peter to his master, " yet will I not deny thee." That very night, notwithstanding this boasted security, he repeated

peated the crime three several times. And can we suppose, that presumption, which occasioned an apostle's fall, shall not ruin an unexperienced youth? The story is recorded for our instruction; and should be a standing lesson against presuming upon our own strength.

In conclusion, such as the dangers are, which arise from bad company, such are the advantages, which accrue from good. We imitate, and catch the manners, and sentiments of good men, as we do of bad. Custom, which renders vice less a deformity, renders virtue more lovely. Good examples have a force beyond instruction, and warm us into emulation beyond precept: while the countenance and conversation of virtuous men encourage, and draw out into action every kindred disposition of our hearts.

Besides

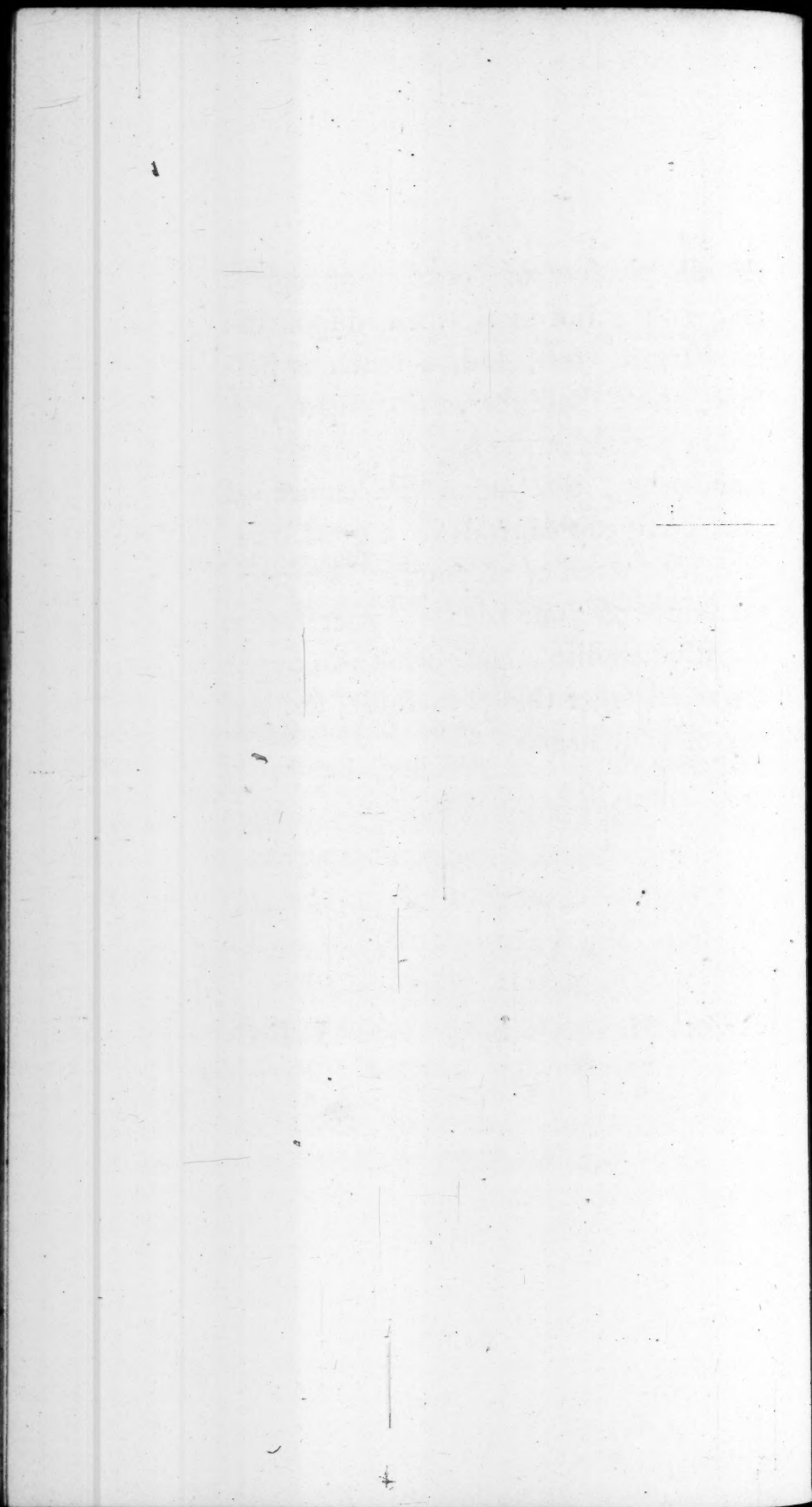
Besides, as a sense of shame often prevents our doing a right thing in bad company ; it operates in the same way in preventing our doing a wrong one in good. Our character becomes a pledge ; and we cannot, without a kind of dishonour, draw back.

It is not possible, indeed, for a youth, yet unfurnished with knowledge, (which fits him for good company) to chuse his companions as he pleases. A youth must have something peculiarly attractive, to qualify him for the acquaintance of men of established reputation. What he has to do, is, at all events, to avoid bad company ; and to endeavour, by improving his mind and morals, to qualify himself for the best.

Happy is that youth, who, upon his entrance into the world, can chuse
his

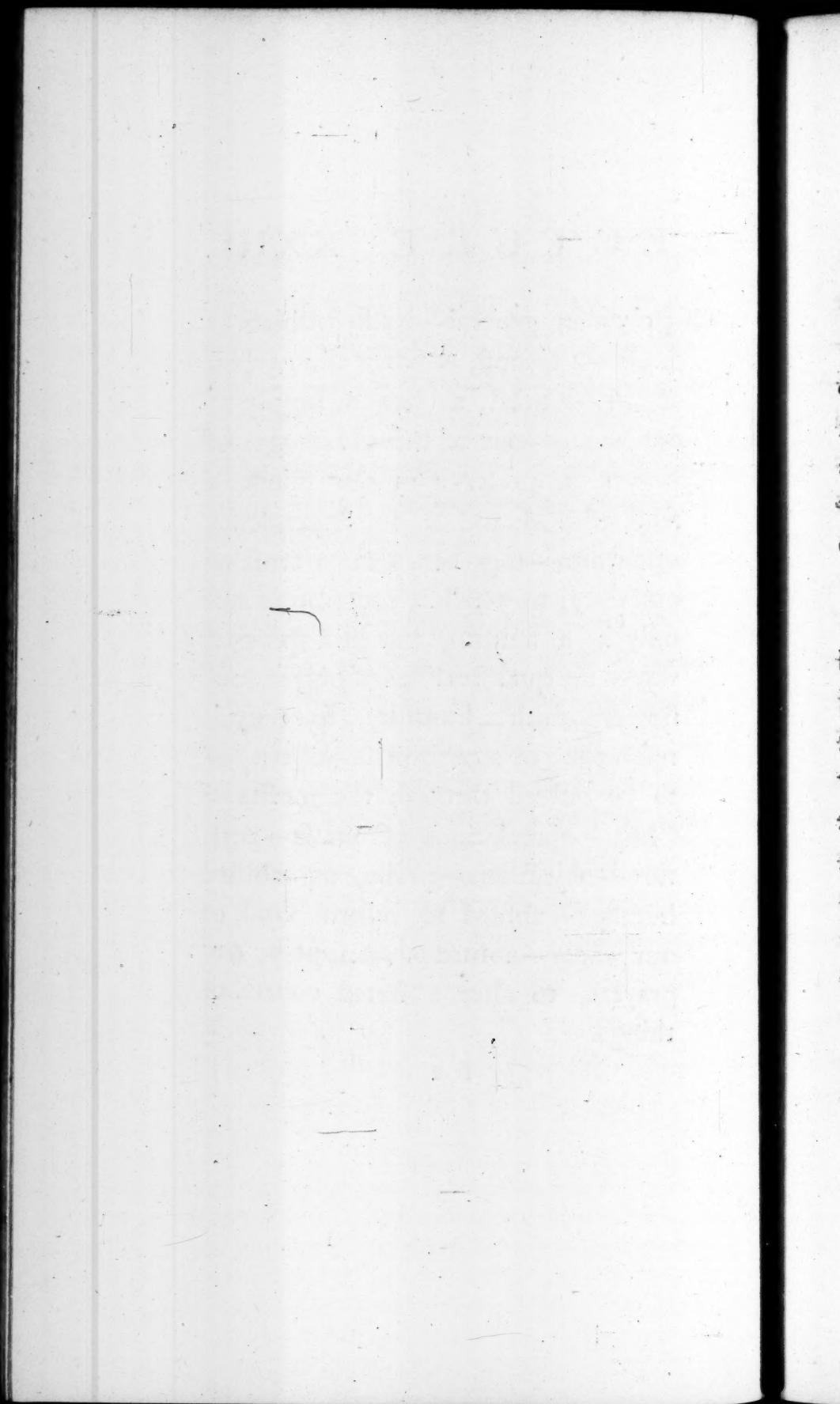
his company with discretion. There is often in vice, a gayety, an unreserve, a freedom of manners, which are apt at first to engage the unwary : while virtue, on the other hand, is often modest, reserved, diffident, backward, and easily disconcerted. That freedom of manners, however engaging, may cover a very corrupt heart : and this awkwardness, however unpleasing, may veil a thousand virtues. Suffer not your mind therefore, to be easily either engaged, or disgusted at first sight. Form your intimacies with reserve : and if drawn unawares into an acquaintance you disapprove, immediately retreat. Open not your hearts to every profession of friendship. They, whose friendship is worth accepting, are, as you ought to be, reserved in offering it. Chuse your companions, not merely for the sake of a few outward accomplishments—for
the

the idle pleasure of spending an agreeable hour ; but mark their disposition to virtue or vice ; and, as much as possible, chuse those for your companions, whom you see others respect : always remembering, that upon the choice of your company depends in a great measure, the success of all you have learned ; the hopes of your friends ; your future characters in life ; and, what you ought above all other things to value, the purity of your hearts.



LECTURE XXIII.

Of prayer in general—its first object is praise—a second, to solicit the pardon of sin—a third, to beg a supply of our wants—one of the advantages of prayer, to preserve in our minds a sense of God, and of our dependence upon him—together with a sense of our duty; to which it contributes not only in a natural, but in a spiritual way—the qualifications of prayer considered—faith—humility—sincerity—resolutions of amendment—charity—to be offered through the merits of Christ—ejaculations of praise—petition—objections—praise, an absurd homage—absurd to inform God of our wants—absurd to attempt by our prayers, to alter a stated course of things.



BEFORE we enter upon the lord's prayer, which falls next under our examination, it may be proper to consider prayer in general—the object, the advantages, and the qualifications of it; together with some of the most popular objections, which are made to it.

When we consider the infinite distance between God and man—between that being, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; and man, with all the weakneses of mortality about him; it may at first appear matter of astonishment, that we are allowed any communication with so great a being. The distinctions, which worldly policy, and worldly pride, make among mankind,—among creatures of the same rank, cannot but raise our ideas still higher of the goodness of God! When we see
man

man treating his fellow-creatures with petulance, and disdain, upon the vile distinctions of station, family, and fortune; what a lesson to us is the goodness of God! Merciful, mild, and condescending to our weaknesses, he listens to, and grants, the petitions of his meanest creatures.

The first great object of prayer is the praise of God. The works of creation naturally raise it: and the goodness of God, in continuing to us that being, which we cannot ourselves preserve; and the comforts which we cannot ourselves procure; brings it home to our feelings. It is a duty, which every rational creature owes to his creator. It is also one of the best sources of our happiness. Simple praise, which consists merely in extolling excellence, is a pleasing theme. But when it is
excited

excited by gratitude, it flows with still greater pleasure. Gratitude has a tendency to improve that happy disposition of mind, which feels every enjoyment that it possesses.

A second object of prayer is, to solicit the pardon of our sins. God not only permits, but even enjoins us to do it : and he has appointed penitent prayer, as one of the means of obtaining pardon. It must ever be accompanied by confession ; as confessing a fault is one of the first steps towards amending it. In this humiliating employment, we have not only to deplore our own sinfulness ; but the lost condition of human nature. Without being truly sensible of this, we can neither acknowledge the means, which God hath used to obviate it ; nor be grateful for them.

After

After thanking God for his past goodness, and endeavouring to make ourselves as worthy as we can of future favours; it is the next object of prayer, to petition a supply of our wants. Among them the principal is, that of the assistance of God's holy spirit. It is the constant doctrine of scripture, that, however necessary our own endeavours are, to make us virtuous; they are not sufficient alone to do it. Our own feelings and imperfections, in a thousand instances, must convince us that this is the case. To counteract the depravity of nature, God hath promised us the divine assistance of his holy spirit: and earnest prayer is the means he hath appointed for the attainment of that end. We are permitted also to pray for our temporal wants. This is indeed the nicest and most delicate part of prayer. Too thankful
for

for past mercies we cannot be: too earnest in soliciting the pardon of our sins, and God's spiritual assistance, we cannot be: but so short sighted are we, that in begging a supply of our temporal wants, we may easily err. But on these heads, I shall be more full, in the explanation of the Lord's prayer.

Besides praising God for his mercies; asking pardon for our sins; and begging a supply of our wants, which are the primary objects of prayer; there are other great advantages, which are closely connected with it.

Of these the first, is to preserve in our minds a sense of God, and of our dependence upon him. When we praise God, we are naturally impressed with an idea of his perfections; and when we beg the forgiveness of our sins, and a
supply

supply of our wants; we are as naturally reminded, that we are weak and sinful creatures: that we are continually under the eye of an all-powerful Being; and are in hourly need of his protection, and favour. And if our prayers be constant, uniform, and fervent; these great truths will be impressed upon our minds, and become the leading principles of our lives.

Prayer is calculated also to impress us with a sense of our duty; and to keep us steady in the practice of it. A virtuous wish is a step towards virtue. A fervent prayer is still a nearer advance. To pray ardently for an increase of virtue, even in a natural way, must increase it: and to pray frequently, must tend to preserve it. Indeed, in the whole circle of christian duties, perhaps there is not one, which has a
greater

greater effect in forming the heart,
than rational devotion.

After the advantages of prayer, let us consider the qualifications of it : or, what concomitant circumstances are necessary to make it an acceptable service to God. It should be founded in faith; and accompanied with humility, sincerity, resolutions of amendment, and charity. It should also be offered up in the name, and through the merits of Christ.

It should first be founded in faith. It is obvious to common sense, that “ he who cometh to God, must believe that he is ; and that he is a rewarder of them, who diligently seek him :” otherwise, why should we come to him at all? We ought therefore to trust his promises, and put up our prayers in the
full

full assurance of being heard. Even men, when their word is plighted, expect this confidence. And shall we approach God with less confidence, than we do man ?

Secondly, our prayers must be accompanied with humility. Humility is expected, even when we ask a favour of our fellow-creatures. What humiliation then is due to God, from whom we have every thing to ask ; and before whom we have not the smallest merits to plead ? An humble heart is in itself a pleasing sacrifice to God. The humility of the publican was half his prayer.

They should be accompanied also with sincerity. Mere lip-service can never please God. It is a mockery of him. Indeed, if our minds are thoroughly

ly

ly impressed with a sense of God's power and goodness; and of our own weakness and dependence; our prayers will of course be sincere: we shall find it less difficult to check the idle wanderings of our thoughts: we shall confess our sins with an heartfelt contrition; and praise God with unfeigned thankfulness. I shall just add, that as we should guard, on one hand, against an unanimate coldness, and insensibility; so ought we, on the other, to avoid all irrational fervour, in our devotions. The effusions of a heated imagination, cannot be a pleasing sacrifice to an all-wise God.

But sincere prayer is of little value in the sight of God, if it be not accompanied with steady resolutions of amendment. If the heart be not improved, devotion is dead. Its fruit is
lost.

lost. To implore pardon for our sins, and not endeavour to avoid them; is shewing ourselves to be just so much in earnest, as to own we are in the wrong; without attempting to get right.

One thing more is necessary to make our devotions acceptable to God; they should be offered up in the spirit of charity. He who begs forgiveness at God's hands, in an unforgiving temper, may as well omit his prayers. He had better omit them. To his uncharitable temper, he only adds a new offence—that of an unworthy prayer. It is the constant language of scripture, that “with the same measure with which we mete, it shall be measured to us again. Give, and it shall be given unto you. Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

But

But no human qualifications alone can carry up our prayers to the throne of grace. We must have other merits, besides our own, to make them acceptable in the sight of God—the all-sufficient merits of our blessed Redeemer. He is the great mediator between God and man. A holy life makes his merits, ours. All our prayers therefore should be offered up in his name, and through his most powerful mediation.

But in the Lord's prayer, no mention is made of the merits of Christ.

It is true; nor could there. When that prayer was composed, the great atonement was not made. How could it then be pleaded? But we are told, it ought to be pleaded, as soon as it was made. "Hitherto," said our Saviour to his disciples, a little before his passion,
 " have

“ have ye asked nothing in my name :
but whatsoever you shall ask the Father
in my name, he will give it you.”

When all these qualifications are united ; when our prayers are founded in faith—when they are accompanied with humility, sincerity, resolutions of amendment, and charity—and lastly, when they are offered up in the name, and through the merits of Christ ; we may assure ourselves, that they will be acceptable in the sight of God.

I shall just add, on this subject, that besides formal prayers, either public or private, a devout mind will find many opportunities of exercising itself, in the midst even of business and pleasure. An ejaculation of praise, a single petition, raised from the heart, in one devout thought, unaccompanied by any external

nal act, will unquestionably find its way to heaven. This is literally having God in all our thoughts; and making our lives a continual prayer.

As reasonable a duty, however, as prayer is, objections have been made to it.

Praise, it hath been said, is an absurd homage: as if the Almighty Father could be pleased with the empty praises of a poor insignificant race of creatures. We are to do all, it seems, to the glory of God. What glory can God receive from our doings? Doth his name in any respect depend upon the breath of man?

To this objection we answer, that if the real exaltation of God's glory, or if any addition to his happiness, be sup-

posed to be the intention of praise ; the idea indeed were very absurd. But certainly with regard to man ; no employment can be more adapted to his nature, or in itself more rational, than to praise his creator. It reminds him of all those great attributes, which, as he praises them, he learns to imitate. It reminds him of that infinite wisdom and power, on which he ought always to depend. It reminds him of that tenderness, and indulgence, which he has so often experienced, and which he ought ever to praise.

When we are ordered therefore to do every thing for the glory of God, the expression is merely adapted to common acceptation ; and alludes to the glory of earthly princes, which good subjects advance by obeying the laws. The highest glory therefore, according to

OUR

our ideas, which God can receive from his creatures, arises from their obedience to his commands.

But it is absurd, replies the objector, to inform God of our wants: nay such information amounts almost to a denial of his omniscience.

Undoubtedly, if it were the intention of the petitioner to inform God; but this never enters into the idea of a prayer. God hath enjoined us to pray for a supply of our wants, as a mean of receiving it. In what manner prayer is efficacious to this purpose, it is not for us to inquire. One thing is very obvious, that dependant creatures ought always to be reminded of their dependant state; and of that Being, from whose bounty they receive every thing they enjoy. And nothing surely can

be better calculated than prayer, to promote this wise end.

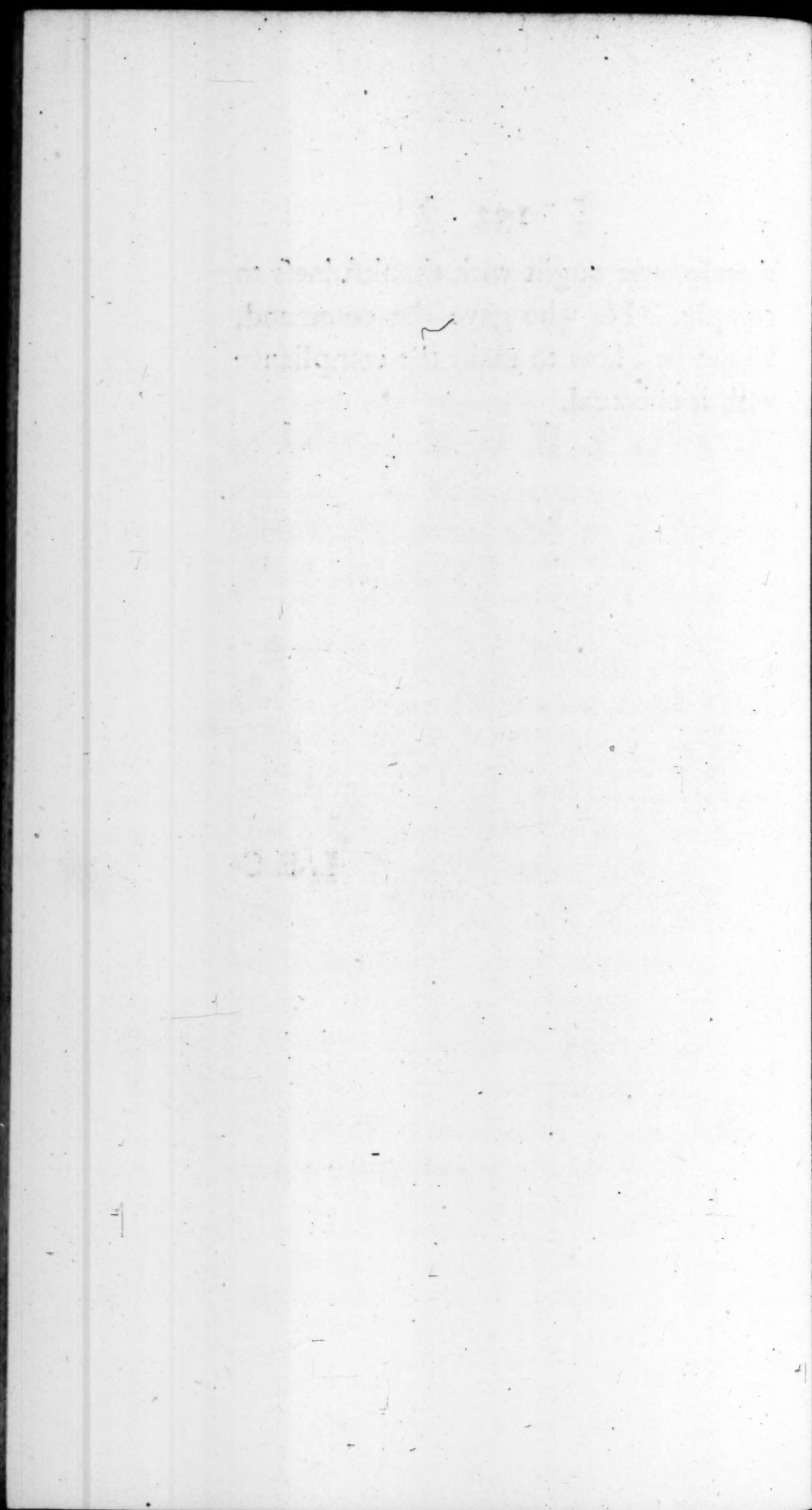
But is not prayer an absurd attempt to alter the stated course of things? And is it not high presumption to imagine, that God will alter it for the sake of our petitions?

The objection is founded in ignorance. Do we know what is the stated course of things? Do we know whether there even exists what the objector calls a stated course? Or whether God may not reserve all events, as far as free agents are concerned, in a mutable condition, dependant on circumstances.

In whatever way our prayers are efficacious, it is not our part to inquire. We have the Almighty's express command for this intercourse with him; and therefore


therefore we ought with thankfulness to comply. He who gave the command, knows best how to make the compliance with it effectual.

LEC.



LECTURE XXIV.

Occasion on which the Lord's prayer was composed—general idea of it—division into five parts—the first contains an address of praise—explanation of the word Father, when applied to God—of the word heaven—The second part contains a petition for the general good of mankind—meaning of hallowing God's name—thy kingdom come—thy will be done.



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HAVING thus considered prayer in general, let us now consider the Lord's prayer.

This prayer was composed by our Saviour, upon a request which his disciples made him; to "teach them to pray, as John taught his disciples." Much of the substance of it is supposed to have been taken from the Jewish forms, then in use; from which our Saviour, as it appears, selecting proper parts, adapted them to his own purpose. This mode of composing a prayer was agreeable to his usual practice; which was to give as little offence as possible to the prejudices of men. In forming a prayer, therefore, he chose rather to take in part what he found already established, than to compose one entirely anew,

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This prayer was not only intended as a form of prayer in itself, but also as a model to shew us how to fashion our prayers. We have the great lines of rational devotion marked out; to which we may adapt our own exigencies. This seems implied in the introduction; "After this manner pray ye." As if our Saviour had said, The precise form of words here given you, needs not always be adhered to: but let it be your general direction.

The Lord's prayer seems to admit an easy division into five parts.

The first contains an invocation of praise: "Our Father, which art in heaven."

The second contains a petition for the general good of mankind; "Hal-
lowed

lowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

The third part contains a petition for temporal blessings: "Give us this day our daily bread."

The fourth, for spiritual: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

The fifth concludes with a profession of our faith. "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever."

PART I.

The first part contains an invocation of praise. "Our father which art in heaven."

The Jews, as far as appears, were not allowed the use of this address to God. At least they had no idea of it in a christian sense. They were taught rather to address him by some such awful title, as the "lord Jehovah—the lord of hosts—or the lord who taketh vengeance." His power, rather than his goodness, was the leading character under which they acknowledged him. But the christian dispensation allows us to address the deity under the tender name of father. "We have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry abba, father. The spirit itself beareth witness with

with our spirit, that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Under the gracious appellation of father, we not only acknowledge God as the creator, and preserver of the world ; but hope from him, as a child expects from his parent, the supply of our wants, assistance in our difficulties, indulgence to our failings, and pardon for our faults : and these kindnesses in a greater degree, proportioned to his greater goodness, and power.

By the word heaven, the Jewish language frequently understands pre-eminence. A city exalted to heaven, means only a city raised to an extraordinary height of power. When we address God therefore in heaven, we are not taught to conceive him as stationed in any particular place of abode : God is present,
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we know, on earth, as well as in heaven; every where, as well as any where. When we address ourselves therefore to God in heaven, we mean only to address ourselves to that God, who is omnipotent, and supreme.

PART II.

After the invocation, the prayer begins, in the spirit of christian benevolence, with a petition for the general good of mankind: "Hallowed be thy name—thy kingdom come—thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

God's name is hallowed, or religiously honoured, when his creatures have just sentiments of him. When we pray therefore, that God's name may be hallowed; we pray, that mankind may have their minds impressed with just ideas of
his

his wisdom, power, justice, and other attributes. In a word, we pray, that all mankind may love, and fear him, as their great benefactor, and judge,—and that, in the scripture language, “ they may sanctify the Lord God in their hearts.”

We farther pray, that mankind may not only have just sentiments of the deity ; but may be partakers also with us in the purity of religion. “ Thy kingdom come.”

By kingdom, in the new testament, or the “ kingdom of heaven,” is generally meant the christian religion. When John the baptist preached, saying, “ the kingdom of heaven is at hand ;” he meant the gospel, or the christian religion, is about to be established. When we pray, therefore, that “ God’s kingdom
dom

dom may come ;” we pray, that the christian religion, in its full purity and perfection, may be established throughout the world ; as what must be most conducive to the happiness of it. This is yet, we see, far from being the case. Great part of the world never heard of christianity. Great part of it, though they have heard of Christ, yet acknowledge him not. A large portion even of the christian world debase christianity almost into heathenism : and great numbers, even where we suppose christianity purely professed, deny the power of it, by leading wicked lives. Great reason therefore have we to pray, that God’s “ kingdom may come.”—We have ground to hope, from many parts of the prophetic writings, that at length “ the fulness of the gentiles shall come in.” And for this event we devoutly pray ; “ when the day star shall arise to all the world ;

world ; and the people, which sit in darkness, shall see a great light :” when the whole race of mankind shall join in the psalmist’s triumphant song, “ the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice : yea the multitude of the isles shall be glad thereof.”

In consequence of men’s having just notions of God, and a true religion to direct them ; we pray, that their lives may be answerable to such advantages ; and that God may be obeyed by mankind on earth, as far as human frailty will permit, as he is by the angels in heaven : “ Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”—Angelic obedience we conceive to be perfect : human obedience, we know, is very defective. Lifeless, and inanimate in our devotions—negligent at best in our practice—our most plausible actions springing

often from unworthy motives; great reason have we to pray, that we, and all mankind may give the best proof of our religious principles, by emulating the prompt obedience of angels; and “doing God’s will on earth, as it is done in heaven.

L E C

LECTURE XXV.

The third part contains a prayer for the supply of our wants—first of a temporal kind—the necessities of life, all we are allowed to pray for—the fourth part contains a prayer for the supply of our spiritual wants—the forgiveness of our sins—and the assistance of God's holy spirit—the phrase “lead us not into temptation,” considered—the fifth part contains an acknowledgement of God's power, and our gratitude—a paraphrase of the whole.

FIGURE XXV.

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P A R T III.

AFTER praying for the general good of mankind; we are instructed to pray for the supply of our own wants. These are of two kinds, temporal and spiritual.

And first, we are allowed to pray for temporal things. "Give us this day our daily bread," is all we are allowed: and it cannot possibly, by any mode of interpretation, extend to more, than the necessities of life. It is a common analogy in language, to make some principal thing stand for many of the same kind. Thus the word faith often stands for the whole of religion; tho it is only a part. And thus the word bread, in the passage before us, stands for all the necessities of life; of which it is the principal. For the necessities of life then we
are

are allowed to pray; but not for the superfluities of it. We must pray in general terms; but must not particularize. For spiritual things, we are at full liberty; because here we cannot err: but with regard to temporal, so circumscribed is all our knowledge, that if we go farther, we may run into error; and in a thousand instances, ask for things, which may prove our ruin. The apostle warns us against those, “who ask amiss, that they may consume it upon their lusts.”

There is something singular in the repetition of the words, this day, and daily; as if human nature, so apt to err on this subject, were doubly cautioned not to be solicitous to lay up a great store for the future: but, to be satisfied with a moderate provision; and that we should not seem to form in our hearts,

hearts, that wicked wish of placing ourselves in a state independent of God. "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee;" is a dreadful sentence upon record against such folly.

P A R T IV.

Being permitted, with these restrictions, to pray for temporal things; we are allowed a larger scope with regard to spiritual. On this head, we have two things to pray for—that God would pardon our past sins; and assist us in avoiding sin for the future. Both these requests are contained in the following words: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

First

First then, we are to beg of God forgiveness of our past sins; and a christian knows, upon what conditions only they will be forgiven. Without a thorough repentance of them—such a repentance, as ends in a reformed life, we know, it is in vain to expect forgiveness.

Something more also is required. We are instructed to approach the throne of God in a forgiving temper towards others; when we petition forgiveness for ourselves: agreeably to those passages of scripture, in which we are told, “that unless we forgive others, our heavenly father will not forgive us;” and that, “when we come to the altar, and there remember that we are at enmity with our neighbour; we must first be reconciled to him, before we presume to offer our gift: that is, before we make our supplication to God. The forgive-
ness

ness of others, therefore, we see, tho not the absolute condition of our own forgiveness, is however a necessary qualification. Tho alone, it cannot obtain our pardon; yet, at the same time, our pardon cannot be obtained without it. Nay, whoever uses the Lord's prayer in an unforgiving temper; instead of begging a blessing, begs a curse. He begs that God "will forgive him, as he forgives others;" that is, he proposes his own uncharitable temper as the only rule, by which he wishes himself to be judged.

Having thus prayed, that God would forgive our past sins; we next beg his assistance in avoiding sin for the future. It hath already been observed, that in this prayer, no mention is made of the merits of Christ; as the great atonement was not then offered. We may observe
also,

also, that no mention is made of the Holy Spirit of God ; which was not then promised. And yet even then, we see, men were ordered to pray for the assistance of God ; to lead them out of temptation, and deliver them from evil. In what way God assisted his faithful servants under the old dispensation ; or how that mode of divine assistance differed from the assistance now afforded us under the dispensation of grace ; is a question of very little importance. Certain it is, that God always did assist his servants ; and never left himself without a witness of his goodness in the moral, as well as in the natural world. But though this prayer was composed before the spirit of truth was promised ; and when man, of course, could not use the petition for God's assistance in that sense, in which it was afterwards used by christians ; yet the christian sense
ought

ought certainly to be the sense in which it should now be used. When we pray therefore for God's assistance to "deliver us from evil;" we pray for it in that way, in which God hath graciously promised it in the gospel; that is, through his Holy Spirit.

The mode of expression is rather singular in the phrase, "Lead us not into temptation." It immediately occurs, how can God lead us into temptation? God, St. James tells us, "tempteth no man."

But the phrase, according to the Jewish idiom, means no more, than that God would lead us out of temptation: that he would not suffer us, in the scripture-language, to be "tempted above our strength; but that he would, with the temptation, make a way to escape." The purport of the petition therefore is,
that

that he would graciously conduct us through all the moral difficulties of this life; and that finally, having passed our pilgrimage here upon earth, he would take us to himself, safe from all our dangers; and grant us peace in a happy immortality.

Surrounded by dangers, and difficulties of every kind, great reason have we for these petitions. Every object around us—every period of age—every station of life—every temper of mind—our passions—our appetites—our imagination—our very reason—all conspire in furnishing abundant matter either to mislead or to seduce us. The poor are tempted to dishonesty, and to repine at God: the rich are tempted by wantonness to forget him. The life of business, and the life of leisure, abound equally with temptations. The man of commerce

commerce with the world, finds them in company: nor can the recluse avoid them in solitude. Thus surrounded by temptations, human power is insufficient to carry us safely through them. To heaven therefore we must pray for assistance. "With God all things are possible." His power co-operating with our endeavours, will enable us to meet our adversary on superior ground. "It can lead us out of temptation; and deliver us from evil."

PART V.

Having thus put up our petitions to God, we conclude with an assurance of our firmest confidence in him. Faith, we know, is one of the greatest requisites of prayer. If we do not believe that God is able to grant our petitions, it is idle to make them. We pray therefore

fore to God—because, “ his is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever, and ever.” He is the supreme disposer of all events: and his power, like his goodness, is above conception. We have the firmest confidence therefore, that he is both able and willing to grant all our reasonable petitions.

The whole prayer then, according to this explanation, may be thus paraphrased :

O thou beneficent Being, our creator, preserver, and father, have mercy upon the whole race of mankind. May we all have just sentiments of thee. May thy true religion be established throughout the world; and may men feel its influence; live suitably to its precepts; and emulate, in their obedience, the blessed spirits of heaven.—

Grant

Grant us such a share of this world's good, as thou see'st most proper for us. We ask not for wealth, or power. Grant us the necessities of life—the rest we submit to thee: and may we never, through the influence of the world, forget our dependence upon thee—Grant, O Lord, that we may make ourselves proper objects of thy mercy and forgiveness. May we have a thorough sense of our own unworthiness; and may that lead us to contrition, penitence, and steady resolutions of amendment. And may we never presume to ask thy forgiveness in an unforgiving temper.—Amidst all the temptations and difficulties of this world, be thou present with us. Let us not be tempted above our strength; but let thy gracious spirit always conduct us. May we exert our own best endeavours in resisting the temptations which arise from the various

rious deluding objects of the world ; and may thy gracious aid render those endeavours successful. So that finally having finished our course, we may, after this state of trial upon earth, be received into the eternal mansions of thy heavenly kingdom. Hear our petitions, O Lord, which are put up in the fullest confidence and faith in thee. We acknowledge thy power, and trust in thy goodness, for a proper supply of all our wants.

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LECTURE XXVII.

Nature of positive duties—definition of a sacrament—its original meaning—the several parts of the definition explained—sacrament of baptism—significancy of water as a sign—baptism of infants.

Vol. II.

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WE have now considered the great duties of faith and obedience; in which consists the sum of religion. These we commonly call morally right, or right in their own nature.

Besides these, there is another species of duties, which are called positive. In their own nature they are indifferent; but are rendered binding, only as they are appointed by divine authority.

The Jews were burdened with a heavy load of these positive duties. One may almost say, the spirit of the Mosaic law consisted in them. In ceremonies also consisted entirely the religion of the heathens. All they knew indeed of religion was a burthensome ritual, made up of external acts, which had no reference to life, and manners.

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Never

Never was any system of religion so free from the burden of ceremonies as christianity; never was any religion so purely addressed to the heart. The two sacraments, of baptism, and the Lord's supper, are the only ceremonies ordained by Christ; both certainly very apposite—baptism, as an outward testimony of our entrance into the christian religion; and the Lord's supper, as an outward testimony of our continuance in it. The former, of course, is administered only once; the latter, frequently.

The short account of the sacraments, contained in the catechism, considers three points; the nature of a sacrament in general—the nature of the sacrament of baptism—and the nature of the Lord's supper.

With

With regard to the nature of a sacrament in general, it is first asked, how many sacraments Christ hath ordained?

The answer is, Two only, as generally necessary to salvation; viz. baptism, and the supper of the Lord.

This question points chiefly at the papists, who hold seven sacraments—baptism, the Lord's supper, confirmation, matrimony, penance, orders, and extreme unction. Now as the word sacrament is no where defined in scripture; we have no objection to a dozen sacraments, instead of seven, if the papists chuse it: all we contend for, is, that none of them should be placed upon an equal footing with baptism and the Lord's supper; which, according to our definition of a sacrament,
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are the only two that are ordained by Christ.

The word sacrament originally implied the oath which soldiers took to their leader; and under this idea it was first adopted into the language of religion. But its meaning, in the earlier ages, was very indefinite: and we find it used among the writers of the first centuries, to express any thing mysterious in religion. By degrees, it obtained a closer acceptation; and among protestants was, at length, confined merely to baptism, and the Lord's supper. However, still unfortunately, the old idea of a mystery in some degree cleaves to it; and has been of prejudice to one of these rites especially; which in itself seems to be as simple, as it is significant.

We

We define a sacrament to be an outward, and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; ordained by Christ himself as a means, whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

In a sacrament, there must first be an outward, visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; that is, a sensible representation of some benefit received.

A sacrament must, secondly, be distinguished from other ceremonies, by being ordained by Christ. Common ceremonies the church may decree, and abrogate at pleasure. They are useful merely for the sake of order; and under different circumstances, different ceremonies may take place. But a sacrament, as ordained by Christ, is of perpetual obligation.

Lastly,

Lastly, a sacrament is a means whereby we receive the grace of God, and a pledge to assure us thereof.—The gospel, we know, is a gracious covenant between God and man. On our part, the conditions are faith, and obedience. On God's part, the forgiveness of our sins, and eternal life. Now the sacraments of baptism, and the Lord's supper, are the appointed means, whereby we receive, or declare our acceptance of these conditions ; and our resolution of observing them. And on God's part, they are a kind of pledge, and security, that these gracious conditions shall be performed. Seals, and signatures, are visible signs, which have in all ages been thought necessary in the execution of a covenant : they are necessary to reduce into a formal act, what would otherwise be only an intention of the mind. In conformity to human ideas,
 God

God thought fit to appoint circumcision, as a ratification of the Jewish covenant. St. Paul mentions it under the idea of a * seal, by which that covenant was confirmed.—Under the same idea, the two sacraments were appointed; and may be considered, on God's part, as his seals to the covenant of grace: or, (as it is here phrased) pledges to assure us thereof.

A sacrament, in general, being thus defined, the sacrament of baptism is next considered; in which, if we consider the inward grace, we shall see how aptly the sign represents it.—The inward grace, or thing signified, we are told, is “a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness:” by which is

* *Rom. iv. 11.*

meant that great renovation of nature, that purity of heart, which the christian religion is intended to produce. And surely there cannot be a more significant sign of this than water, on account of its cleansing nature. As water refreshes the body, and purifies it from all contracted filth; it aptly represents that renovation of nature, which cleanses the soul from the impurities of sin. Water indeed, among the ancients, was more adapted to the thing signified, than it is at present among us. They used immersion in baptising: so that the child being dipped into the water, and raised out again; baptism with them was more significant of a new birth unto righteousness. But though we, in these colder climates, think immersion an unsafe practice; yet the original meaning is still supposed.

It

It is next asked, What is required of those who are baptised? To this we answer, “ Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God, made to them in that sacrament.”

The primitive church was extremely strict on this head. In those times, before christianity was established, when adults offered themselves to baptism, no one was admitted, till he had given a very satisfactory evidence of his repentance; and till, on good grounds, he could profess his faith in Christ: and it was afterwards expected from him, that he should prove his faith, and repentance, by a regular obedience, during the future part of his life.

If faith, and repentance, are expected at baptism; it is a very natural question,

tion, Why then are infants baptised, when, by reason of their tender age, they can give no evidence of either?

Whether infants should be admitted to baptism, or whether that sacrament should be deferred till years of discretion; is a question in the christian church, which hath been agitated with some animosity. Our church by no means looks upon baptism as necessary to the infant's salvation.* No man acquainted with the spirit of christianity, can conceive, that God will leave the salvation of so many innocent souls in

** The catechism asserts the sacraments to be only generally necessary to salvation, excepting particular cases. Where the use of them is intentionally rejected, it is certainly criminal.—The Quakers indeed reject them on principle: but though we may wonder both at their logic, and divinity; we should be sorry to include them in an anathema.*

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the hands of others. But the practice is considered as founded upon the usage of the earliest times : and the church observing, that circumcision was the introductory rite to the jewish covenant ; and that baptism was intended to succeed circumcision ; it naturally supposes, that baptism should be administered to infants, as circumcision was. The church, however, in this case, hath provided sponsors ; who make a profession of obedience in the child's name. But the nature and office of this proxy hath been already examined, under the head of our baptismal vow.

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LECTURE XXVIII.

Sacrament of the Lord's supper—its end—significancy of its symbols—the words “verily and indeed taken” explained—frame of mind requisite on receiving it—other ends in the sacrament, besides those proposed.

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HAVING thus considered the sacrament of baptism, the catechism proceeds lastly to the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

The first question is an inquiry into the original of the institution: "Why was the sacrament of the Lord's supper ordained?"

It was ordained, we are informed,—
"for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ; and of the benefits which we receive thereby."

In examining a sacrament in general, we have already seen, that both baptism, and the Lord's supper, were originally instituted as the "means of receiving the grace of God; and as pledges to assure us thereof."

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But besides these primary ends, they have each a secondary one ; in representing the two most important truths of religion ; which gives them more force, and influence. Baptism, we have seen, represents that renovation of our sinful nature, which the gospel was intended to introduce : and the peculiar end, which the Lord's supper had in view, was the sacrifice of the death of Christ ; with all the benefits which arise from it—the remission of our sins—and the reconciliation of the world to God. “ This do,” said our Saviour, (alluding to the passover, which the Lord's supper was designed to supersede) not as hitherto, in memory of your deliverance from Egypt ; but in memory of that greater deliverance, of which the other was only a type : “ Do it in remembrance of me.”

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The outward part, or sign of the Lord's supper, is "bread and wine"—the things signified are the "body and blood of Christ."—In examining the sacrament of baptism, I endeavoured to shew, how very apt a symbol water is in that ceremony. Bread and wine also are symbols equally apt in representing the body and blood of Christ: and in the use of these particular symbols, it is reasonable to suppose, that our Saviour had an eye to the Jewish passover; in which it was a custom to drink wine, and to eat bread. He might have instituted any other apt symbols for the same purpose; but it was his usual practice, through the whole system of his institution, to make it, in every part, as familiar as possible: and for this reason he seems to have chosen such symbols as were then in use; that he might give as little of-

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fence, as possible, in a matter of indifference.

As our Saviour, in the institution of his supper, ordered both the bread and the wine to be received ; it is certainly a great error in papists, to deny the cup to the laity. They say indeed, that, as both flesh and blood are united in the substance of the human body ; so are they in the sacramental bread ; which, according to them, is changed, or, as they phrase it, transubstantiated into the real body of Christ. If they have no other reason, why do they administer wine to the clergy ? The clergy might participate equally of both in the bread.—But the plain truth is, they are desirous, by this invention, to add an air of mystery to the sacrament, and a superstitious reverence to the priest ; as if he, being endowed with some peculiar

culiar holiness, might be allowed the use of both.

There is a difficulty in this part of the catechism, which should not be passed over. We are told, that "the body and blood of Christ are verily, and indeed taken, and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper." This expression sounds very like the popish doctrine, just mentioned, of transubstantiation. The true sense of the words undoubtedly is, that the faithful believer only, verily and indeed receives the benefit of the sacrament: but the expression must be allowed to be inaccurate, as it is capable of an interpretation so entirely opposite to that which the church of England hath always professed.—I would not willingly suppose, as some have done, that the compilers of the catechism meant to manage
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the affair of transubstantiation with the papists. It is one thing to shew a liberality of sentiment in matters of indifference ; and another to speak timidly, and ambiguously, where essentials are concerned.

It is next asked, What benefits we receive from the Lord's supper? To which it is answered, " The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine." As our bodies are strengthened and refreshed, in a natural way, by bread and wine ; so should our souls be, in a spiritual way, by a devout commemoration of the passion of Christ. By gratefully remembering what he suffered for us, we should be excited to a greater abhorrence of sin, which was the cause of his sufferings. Every time we partake
of

of this sacrament, like faithful soldiers, we take a fresh oath to our leader ; and should be animated anew, by his example, to persevere in the spiritual conflict, in which, under him, we are engaged.

It is lastly asked, “ What is required of them, who come to the Lord’s supper ?” To which we answer, “ That we should examine ourselves, whether we repent us truly of our former sins—stedfastly purposing to lead a new life—have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ—with a thankful remembrance of his death ; and to be in charity with all men.”

That pious frame of mind is here, in very few words, pointed out ; which a Christian ought to cherish, and cultivate in himself at all times ; but especially

cially, upon the performance of any solemn act of religion. Very little indeed is said in scripture, of any particular frame of mind, which should accompany the performance of this duty; but it may easily be inferred from the nature of the duty itself.

In the first place, "we should repent us truly of our former sins; stedfastly purposing to lead a new life." He who performs a religious exercise, without being earnest in this point; adds only a pharisaical hypocrisy to his other sins. Unless he seriously resolve to lead a good life, he had better be all of a piece; and not pretend, by receiving the sacrament, to a piety which he does not feel.

These "stedfast purposes of leading a new life," form a very becoming exercise

ercise to christians. The lives even of the best of men afford only a mortifying retrospect. Though they may have conquered some of their worst propensities; yet the triumphs of sin over them, at the various periods of their lives, will always be remembered with sorrow; and may always be remembered with advantage; keeping them on their guard for the future, and strengthening them more and more in all their good resolutions of obedience.—And when can these meditations arise more properly, than when we are performing a rite, instituted on purpose to commemorate the great atonement for sin?

To our repentance, and resolutions of obedience, we are required to add “a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ; with a thankful remembrance of his death.” We should impress ourselves

selves with the deepest sense of humility—totally rejecting every idea of our own merit—hoping for God's favour only through the merits of our great Redeemer—and with hearts full of gratitude, trusting only to his all-sufficient sacrifice.

Lastly, we are required, at the celebration of this great rite, to be “in charity with all men.” It commemorates the greatest instance of love that can be conceived; and should therefore raise in us correspondent affections. It should excite in us that constant flow of benevolence, in which the spirit of religion consists; and without which indeed we can have no religion at all. Love is the very distinguishing badge of christianity: “By this,” said our great Master, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples.”

One

One species of charity should, at this time, never be forgotten ; and that is, the forgiveness of others. No acceptable gift can be offered at this altar, but in the spirit of reconciliation. — Hence it was, that the ancient christians instituted, at the celebration of the Lord's supper, what they called love-feasts. They thought, they could not give a better instance of their being in perfect charity with each other ; than by joining, all ranks together, in one common meal.—By degrees, indeed, this well-meant custom degenerated ; and it may not be amiss to observe here, that the passages * in which these enormities are rebuked, have been variously misconstrued ; and have frightened many well-meaning persons from the sacrament. Whereas what the apostle here says, hath no other relation

* See 1 Cor. xi.

to this rite, than as it was attended by a particular abuse in receiving it: and as this is a mode of abuse, which doth not now exist; the apostle's reproof seems not to affect the christians of this age.

What the * primary, and what the † secondary ends in the two sacraments were, I have endeavoured to explain. But there might be others.

God might intend them as trials of our faith. The divine truths of the gospel speak for themselves: but the performance of a positive duty rests only on faith.

These institutions are also strong arguments for the truth of christianity. We trace the observance of them into

* P. 305.

† P. 311.

the very earliest times of the gospel. We can trace no other origin, than what the scriptures give us. These rites therefore greatly tend to corroborate the scriptures.

God also, who knows what is in man, might condescend so far to his weakness, as to give him these external badges of religion, to keep the spirit of it more alive. And it is indeed probable, that nothing has contributed more than these ceremonies to preserve a sense of religion among mankind. It is a melancholy proof of this, that no contentions in the christian church have been more violent, nor carried on with more acrimony, and unchristian zeal, than the contentions about baptism and the Lord's supper; as if the very essence of religion consisted in this or that mode of observing these rites.— But this is the abuse of them.

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Let us be better taught : let us receive these sacraments, for the gracious purposes for which our Lord enjoined them, with gratitude, and with reverence. But let us not lay a greater stress upon them than our Lord intended. Heaven, we doubt not, may be gained, when there have been the means of receiving neither the one sacrament nor the other. But unless our affections are right, and our lives answerable to them; we can never please God, though we perform the externals of religion with ever so much exactness. We may err in our notions about the sacraments : the world has long been divided on these subjects ; and a gracious God, it may be hoped, will pardon our errors. But in matters of practice, we have no apology for error. The great lines of our duty are drawn so strong, that a deviation here, is not error, but guilt.

Let

Let us then, to conclude from the whole, make it our principal care to purify our hearts in the sight of God. Let us beseech him to increase the influence of his Holy Spirit within us, that our faith may be of that kind, "which worketh by love;" that all our affections, and from them our actions may flow in a steady course of obedience; that each day may correct the last by a sincere repentance of our mistakes in life; and that we may continue gradually to approach nearer the idea of christian perfection. Let us do this, disclaiming, after all, any merits of our own; and not trusting in outward observances; but trusting in the merits of Christ to make up our deficiencies; and we need not fear our acceptance with God.

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THAT IS TO SAY,
A N I N S T R U C T I O N

TO BE LEARNED OF EVERY PERSON,
BEFORE HE BE BROUGHT TO BE CONFIRMED
BY THE BISHOP.

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C A T E C H I S M, &c.

Question.

WH A T is your Name?

Answ. N. or M.

Quest. Who gave you this Name?

Answ. My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism; wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

Quest. What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then for you?

Answ. They did promise and vow three things in my name: First, that I should renounce the devil, and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts

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of the flesh Secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. And thirdly, that I should keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.

Quest. Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do, as they have promised for thee?

Answ. Yes verily; and by God's help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end.

Catechist. Rehearse the articles of thy belief?

Answer.

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And

And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholick church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Quest. What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?

Ans. First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world;

Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind;

Thirdly,

Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.

Quest. You said that your Godfathers and Godmothers did promise for you, that you should keep God's Commandments: Tell me how many there be?

Ans. Ten.

Ans. Which be they?

Answer.

THE same which God spake in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

I. Thou shalt have none other gods but me.

II. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under

under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them: for I the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love me, and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates.

For

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day ; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

V. Honour thy father and thy mother : that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt do no murder.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his.

Quest. What dost thou chiefly learn by these commandments ?

Answ.

Answ. I learn two things ; my duty towards God, and my duty towards my neighbour.

Quest. What is thy duty towards God ?

Answ. My duty towards God is, to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength : to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy name and his word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life.

Quest. What is thy duty towards thy neighbour ?

Answ. My duty towards my neighbour is, to love him as myself, and to do to all men, as I would they should do unto me. To love, honour, and succour my father and mother. To honour
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honour and obey the king, and all that
 are put in authority under him. To
 submit myself to all my governors,
 teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters.
 To order myself lowly and reverently
 to all my betters. To hurt nobody by
 word or deed. To be true and just in
 all my dealings. To bear no malice
 or hatred in my heart. To keep my
 hands from picking and stealing; and
 my tongue from evil speaking, lying,
 and flandering. To keep my body in
 temperance, soberness, and chastity.
 Not to cover, nor desire other men's
 goods; but to learn and labour truly
 to get my own living; and to do my
 duty in that state of life, unto which
 it shall please God to call me.

Catechist. My good child, know this,
 that thou art not able to do these
 things of thyself, nor to walk in the
 commandments of God, and to serve
 him,

him, without his special grace ; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer. Let me hear therefore, if thou canst say the Lord's prayer ?

Answer.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name : thy kingdom come : thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven : give us this day our daily bread : and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us : and lead us not into temptation : but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Quest. What desirest thou of God in this prayer ?

Answ. I desire my Lord God, our heavenly Father, who is the giver of all goodness, to send his grace unto me, and to all people ; that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him,

as we ought to do. And I pray unto God, that he will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies; and that he will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins; and that it will please him to save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily; and that he will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death. And this I trust he will do of his mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ: and therefore I say, Amen. So be it.

Question.

How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his church?

Ans. Two only, as generally necessary to salvation; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Quest. What meanest thou by this word *Sacrament*?

Ans.

Answ. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us; ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

Quest. How many parts are there in a sacrament?

Answ. Two: the outward visible sign; and the inward spiritual grace.

Quest. What is the outward visible sign, or form in baptism?

Answ. Water: wherein the person is baptized, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Quest. What is the inward and spiritual grace?

Answ. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.

Quest.

Quest. What is required of persons to be baptized ?

Ans. Repentance, whereby they forsake sin ; and faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God, made to them in that sacrament.

Quest. Why then are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them ?

Ans. Because they promise them both by their sureties : which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

Quest. Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained ?

Ans. For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ ; and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

Quest. What is the outward part, or sign of the Lord's Supper ?

Ans.

Answ. Bread and wine ; which the Lord hath commanded to be received.

Quest. What is the inward part, or thing signified ?

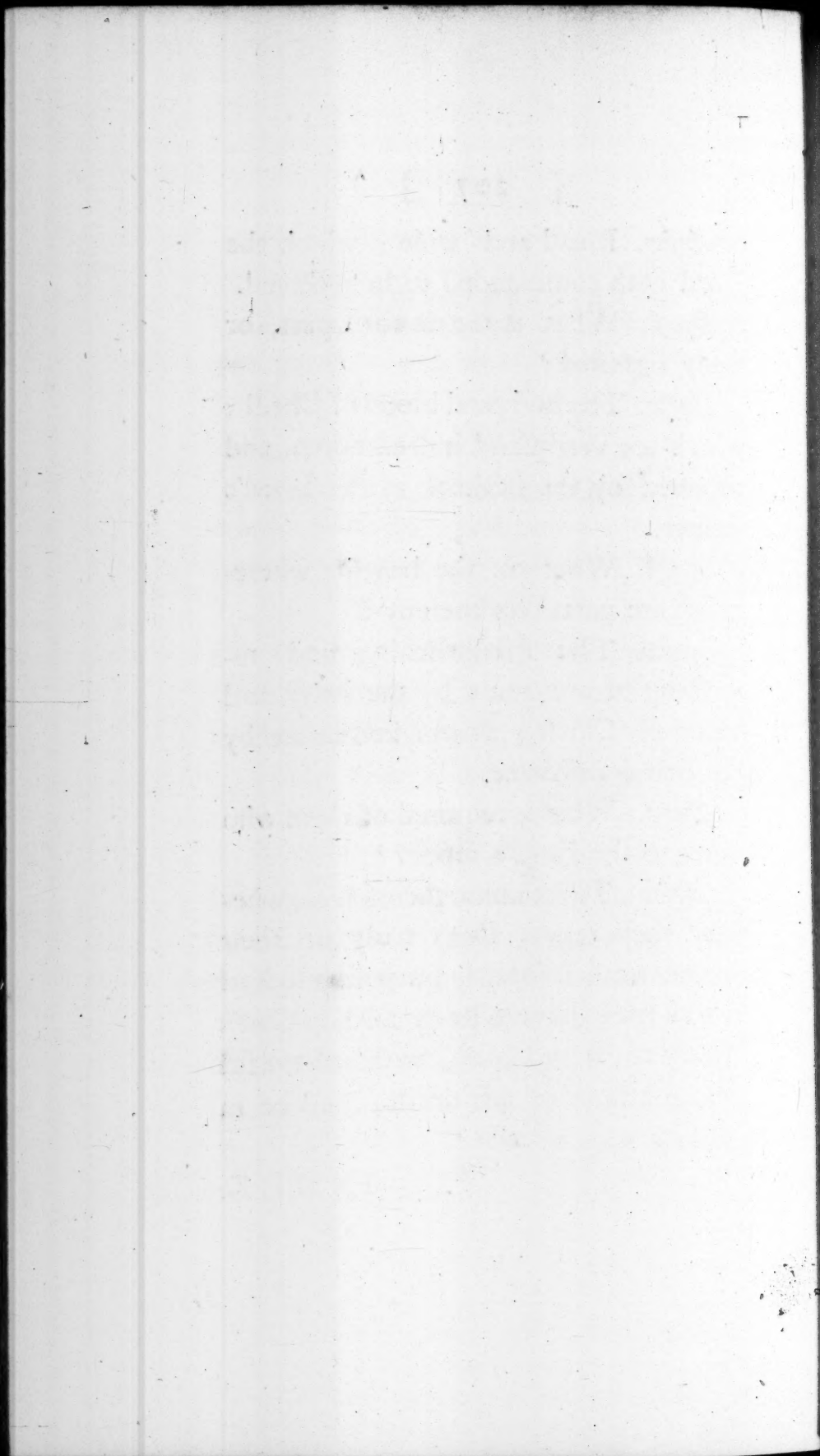
Answ. The body and blood of Christ ; which are verily and indeed taken, and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper.

Quest. What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby ?

Answ. The strengthening and refreshing of our sou's by the body and blood of Christ ; as our bodies are by the bread and wine,

Quest. What is required of them who come to the Lord's supper ?

Answ. To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins ; stedfastly purposing to lead a new life ; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death ; and be in charity with all men.



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